



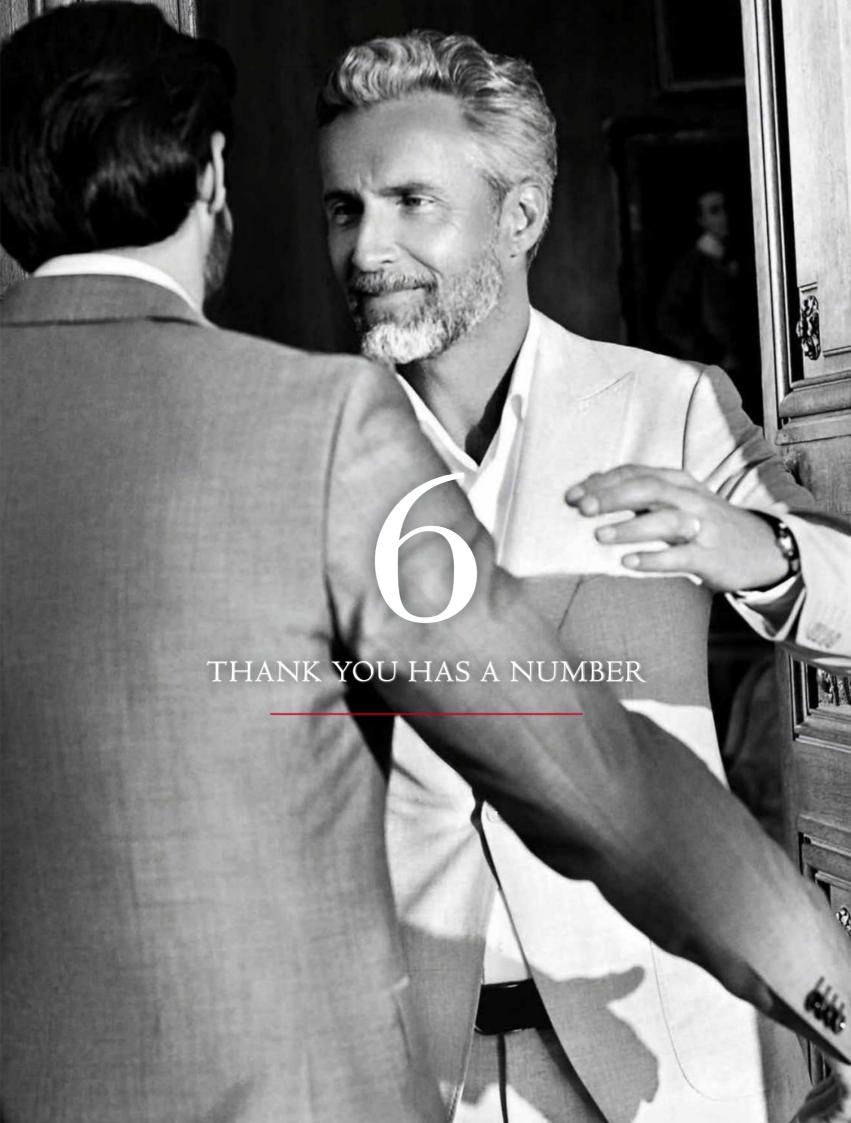


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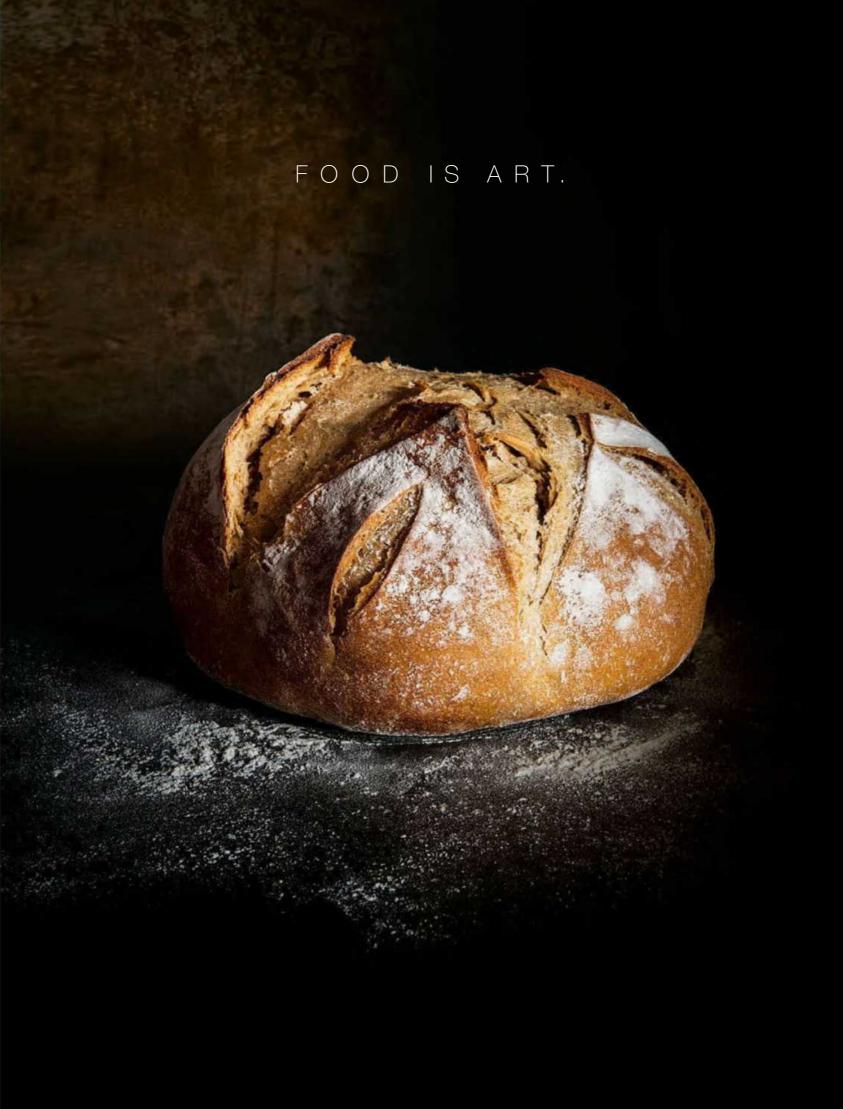


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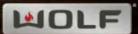


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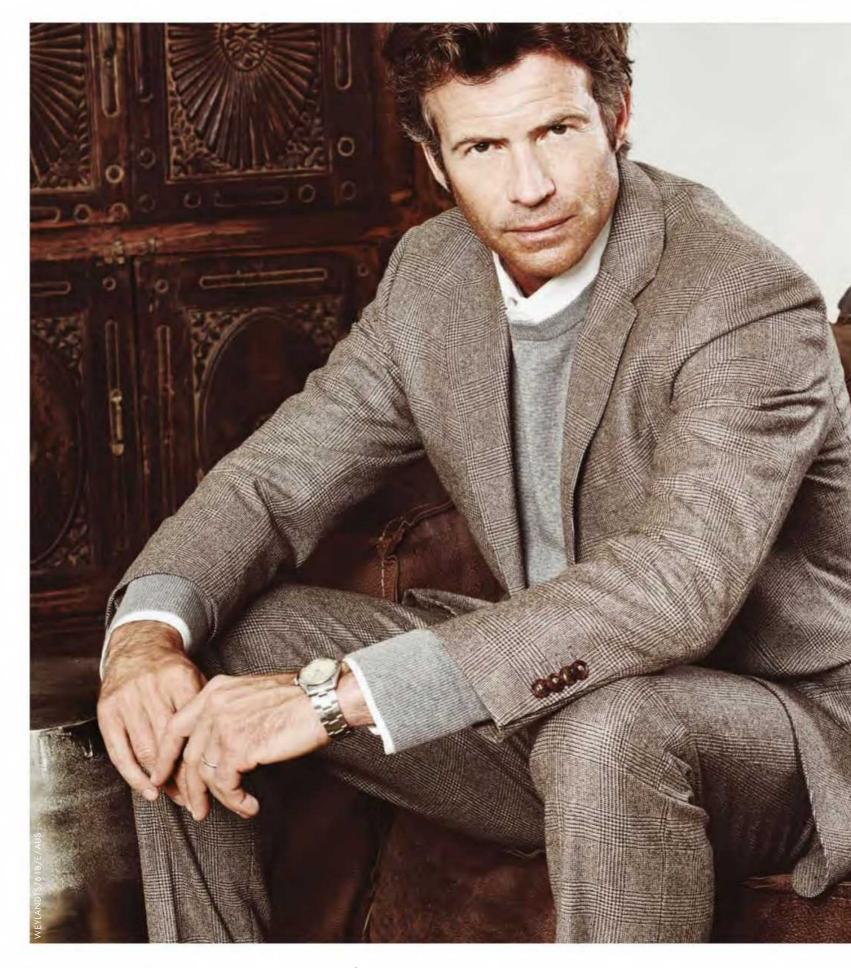
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*Based on a survey of 57 subjects aged 45-65 after 28 days ** Offer available at Jurilque Boutiques, participating David Jones and Myer stores. Visit jurilque.com.au for a complete list of participating stores. One 7 day trial per customer, while stocks last. Offer expires 14" September 2015. 7 day trial determined by Jurilque.

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WEYLANDTS

HOME OUTFITTERS



September

FOOD

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Sydney is the scene of some of the most innovative takes on Italian cooking as local chefs push the boundaries with a thrillingly free-range approach to la vera cucina.

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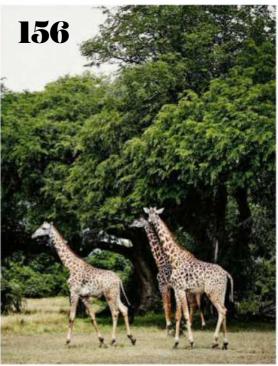
There's more star-quality accommodation opening in the Queensland capital than in any other city in the country. We check out Brisbane's hottest new hotels.

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Neil Perry takes us on a whistle-stop tour of his best-loved haunts in one of his favourite cities.









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Pull up a chair, unfurl some linen, reach for a fork and raise a glass as we present the winners of the *Gourmet Traveller* Restaurant Awards.



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SEPTEMBER 2015

menus

Three bright and breezy menus from this issue to chime with the change of season.

DRINK SUGGESTIONS MAX ALLEN







PICNIC IN THE PARK

Cime di rapa morning buns
(RECIPE **P139**)

Broccoli, feta and anchovy fillo pie (PICTURED; RECIPE 55)

Hot-smoked trout and egg salad (RECIPE P61)

Butternut squash-coconut tart



Can a picnic without Champagne, or any delicious *sparkling wine*, truly be called a picnic? Ponder the question while you pop the cork on a nice bottle of pink fizz and crack the screwcap on a *pale*, *dry rosé*, and see which works best with this particular spread.

SPRINGTIME DINNER

Spring egg-drop soup (RECIPE P137)

Maltagliati with washed kimchi and guanciale (RECIPE P212)

Grilled witlof, mint and almond salad with blackened mandarin
(RECIPE P131)

Pistachio vacherin (PICTURED; RECIPE **P202**)



Serve young, bright, refreshing wines from the 2015 vintage with this dinner: a *crisp riesling, zesty sauvignon blanc, fruity rosé, slurpy unwooded red,* say. Then a sparkling moscato with the vacherin or a sweet-and-bitter *Italian nut-based digestivo liqueur.*

FATHER'S DAY LUNCH

Tagliatelle with asparagus and parmesan fonduta (RECIPE P141)

Braised short ribs with pomme purée and gremolata
(PICTURED: RECIPE P148)

Grilled Caesar salad (RECIPE P132)

Blueberry cobbler with ice-cream (RECIPE PSS)



It's Dad's day, so kick off with celebratory *bubbles* – something expensive and late-disgorged, with lots of yeasty richness to match the cheesy pasta. With the ribs, open the best bottle you can afford of Dad's favourite style of *red* and finish with a *sweet young Port*.

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ON THE COVER: CLAY CANOE CONDIMENT DISHES (WITH SIU MAI) FROM HONEYBEE. SMALL DISHES (WITH SAUCE AND GINGER) FROM MH CERAMICS. ALL OTHER PROPS STYLIST'S OWN. STOCKISTS P199.

Few chefs have *endured the restaurant game* for more than three decades and even fewer at the *pointy end of the trade*.

Then there's Neil Perry, who's not only enduring in his fourth decade in business, but thriving. His restaurant empire now spans three cities and eight restaurants. Throw in a high-profile airline contract, cookbooks and recipe columns, charity work, the odd TV-presenting gig and it's a busy time, as much chief executive as chef.

Whether it's finding the sweet spot for dry-ageing beef at his Rockpool Bar & Grill restaurants, sourcing produce for fast-food outlet Burger Project or shining a light on lesser-known Chinese cuisines at his Spice Temple eateries, Perry's hands-on commitment to excellence is steadfast.

Of course, Empire Perry wouldn't be half the impressive beast it is without a cadre of first-class talent behind it. In the case of Rockpool, Perry's signature fine-diner and our 2016 Restaurant of the Year, chef Phil Wood is entrusted with the kitchen, delivering food that is as confident as it is graceful, elegant as it is downright delicious. Add to the picture sommelier Sebastian Crowther, maître d' Silvio Brentan, general manager Jeremy Courmadias, and partner Trish Richards, and you have a team working together to create a most sublime dining experience — one that proves luxury and comfort and fun need not be mutually exclusive. A big congratulations to Neil and his team, and to all of our Restaurant Awards winners (see page 100): we raise a glass to all of you.

The awards are the crowning glory of our *Restaurant Guide*, the only national guide in the country, and the man responsible for making it all happen is our chief critic and guide editor, Pat Nourse. Nourse, along with coordinator Maggie Scardifield and managing editor Lynn Lewis, have outdone themselves with this year's edition — it's our tastiest yet. Enjoy,



Anthea Loucas

ON THE COVER Siu mai (recipe page 623. Recipe Tony Tan Photography William Meppem Styling Emma Knowles Merchandising Rhianne Contreras

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FIONA DONNELLY

As Gourmet Traveller's Queensland editor, Fiona Donnelly has been tracking the rapidly evolving Brisbane hospitality scene for nearly a decade. In this issue, the columnist and

former Courier-Mail food editor reports on the Queensland capital's upscale hotel accommodation revolution on page 174. "Brisbane is transforming itself," she says, "and with a bumper haul of fashionable and quirky digs now on offer, it's a great time to visit."



OUR FAVOURITE PLATES OF THE MONTH

TRUFFLE CROQUE-MONSIEUR

South Melbourne wine bar Smalls is a great place to drink interesting wine but there's equal pull from the compact food menu. It includes a barnstorming croque-monsieur where the classic, crisp pan-fried ham and cheese sandwich is pimped with plenty of freshly shaved truffle. Who would have thought a simple toastie could be so deluxe? Smalls, 20 Yarra Pl, South Melbourne, smallsbar.com.au MICHAEL HARDEN

GRILLED FOIE GRAS

Yakiton is a word new to my vocabulary, but one I now treasure. Pork grilled over charcoal is the focus at this French-leaning wine bar, but that doesn't stop them from also offering skewered foie gras, smoky from the coals and glazed with sticky balsamic vinegar. It's happiness on a stick. Vinpicoeur Ginza, level 2, 4-3-4 Ginza, Tokyo, Japan, +81 3 3567 4122 ANNA VU

RABBIT TORTELLINI

Canterbury-grown truffles might be a relatively new addition to the region's larder, but local chefs have been quick to embrace the rare fungi. One of the finer iterations doing the rounds stars springy rabbit dumplings tossed through an earthy bianchetto butter sauce before being finished with shaved Périgord truffle. Mighty, and then some. Black Estate, 614 Omihi Rd, Waipara, New Zealand, +64 3 314 6085 MAX VEENHUYZEN

BESHA RODELL



way Americans really eat, is due to be published in 2017. This month she spoke to Curtis Stone about his return to the kitchen at Maude in Beverly Hills (see page 144). Says Rodell, "He really is one of the most genuinely nice dudes I've come across in the cheffing world."



28

JENNIFER BYRNE

Jennifer Byrne spent many years travelling the world as a journalist in print, radio and TV. She now reads books for a living as host of the ABC's Book Club, but still regularly gets her itchy feet off the couch and

back into the world to write travel stories. For this issue she heads to the wilds of Zambia (see page 156): "It's Africa's green heart," she says, "landlocked but blessed with many mighty rivers and the full alphabet of wildlife, from aardvark to zebra. I saw both!"

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TRAY CHIC This coated plywood

tray (\$99) is one of the many highlights from Marimekko's new Hattarakukka collection, launching early October. marimekko.com

BITTERS HARVEST

Last year it was gin; this year bitters are all the rage in home-grown drink territory. The Australian Bitters Company was the first to jump on board with their aromatic bitters (\$18 for a 250ml bottle). It's been made specifically to work in the classic lemon, lime and bitters, using more than 20 herbs and spices. australian bitters company.com.au



gourmetnews

FOOD CULTURE DINING DESIGN

EDITED BY PAT NOURSE & MAYA KERTHYASA

DREAM TIME

René Redzepi is bringing Noma to the shores of Sydney Harbour.



Noma comes to Australia

One of the globe's most influential eateries is coming Down Under in 2016. Noma is coming to Australia. What started as a whisper among chefs here and in Denmark over the past several months started to seem a lot more real with each sighting of chef René Redzepi and other members of his team around the country. Now it's official: the Copenhagen restaurant, several times named the world's best, and unquestionably one of the globe's most influential eateries, is moving to Sydney for 10 weeks from the end of January.

Inspired by the excitement generated by Noma's cameo in Tokyo earlier this year, Redzepi says plans for a new overseas adventure were well under way before the team left Japan, and Australia was the first choice. "I really like working with Aussies," he says. "And I hope to learn something new."

A collaboration between Tourism Australia, LendLease and Noma, Noma Australia will open on the waterfront of the Barangaroo development, on the Sydney CBD's western fringe. Redzepi has confirmed that it'll be a brand-new menu – the full Noma experience, but using Australian ingredients. Many of the practicalities, however, such as how and when bookings will be offered ("No clue") and what it'll cost ("We don't know yet. Four or five hundred") are still being worked out. But he's very fired up by what he has seen and tasted on his research trips.

"I really hope that by going into a completely new landscape we will be able to see our own world in a different way, and become better at what we do at home through the experiences that we have in Australia." noma.dk

RUOK? Jeremy Strode has enlisted a stunning roster of talent to cook at Sydney's Ivy Ballroom on 8 September in support of the suicide-prevention foundation RUOK? Tables for 10 are \$3500 each at eventbrite.com.au.



Shilo Engelbrecht

The table is central to life's most memorable moments for this textile designer. Cape Town-born Shilo Engelbrecht splits her time between the UK, her parents' lychee farm in northern New South Wales, and Stockholm, where she's had a studio since 2013. While you might have come across her larger-scale works in the lifts at the Ham Yard Hotel in London, say, Engelbrecht's collection of smaller homewares, Älv, is equally striking. The magic starts on canvas: her oil paintings are photographed, then digitally printed on soft European linens and silk.

What prompted you to start making your homewares line?

I love covering the walls with art, but I felt there was the potential to inject beauty into other, more interactive elements of the home. So much of life revolves around the table and I wanted to try to elevate these everyday moments.

What's the Älv signature?

A focus on colour and translating the texture and detail of brushstrokes onto linen. Colour is a language I understand and environmentally linen is very attractive to work with. Älv by Shilo Engelbrecht, from \$50, shilo.net.au MAGGIE SCARDIFIELD



GLASS ACT

Riedel's Heart to Heart Central Otago Pinot Noir glass (\$59.95 for two) has been tailored to enhance the pinot noir from New Zealand's southernmost wine region. riedel.com



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GOURMET HOT PLATES

Our restaurant critics' picks of the latest and best eats, updated weekly on our website:

gourmettraveller.com.au

SYDNEY

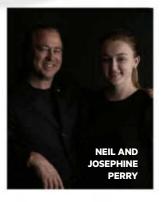
Neil Perry's 21-year-old daughter, Josephine, has followed in her father's footsteps with Missy French, her new Potts Point bistro and first solo venture. Grant Cheyne, the architect responsible for the looks of most of Perry père's restaurants, has designed the room. Former Rockpool chef Chris Benedet heads the kitchen, serving the likes of fruits de mer and duck crépinettes with sauce bigarade.

MELBOURNE

Eastland shopping centre in Ringwood is sending its food court upmarket. The rebranded Town Square development will include outposts of George Calombaris's souvlaki joint, Jimmy Grants. Frank Camorra's Paco's Tacos. Daniel Wilson's ever-expanding Huxtaburger chain, and the first Australian outlet of the Italian Lavezzi family's Gelatieri. It's expected to be up and running before the end of the year.

ADFI AIDF

The crew from Press Food & Wine has opened Osteria Oggi, an Italian joint on Pirie Street channeling a "1950s Italian piazza" feel. While Press's Andrew Davies is executive chef.



the kitchen is run by Mimi Rivers, who's been the head chef at Press for four years. Share-friendly modern Italian food is the name of the game, with a focus on new pasta styles and inventive sauces.

NEW YORK

A Manhattan landmark is about to get a bold new flavour as Mario Carbone. Rich Torrisi, and Jeff Zalaznick of Major Food Group - the team responsible for Carbone and Santina - take over the restaurant at The Four Seasons. The hand-over will take place next year, with the relaunch slated for 2017

BRISBANE

Chef-restaurateur Ben O'Donoghue is tuning up a second Billykart Kitchen. The 90-seat restaurant should be open by late October at Aria Property Group's new Botanica Residences on the border of Brisbane's West End.

THE PRODUCERS

Picklehead pickles

Local ingredients and a tried-and-true formula make for magic in a jar.

WHO Director-photographer Mikey Hilburger and his wife, Lizzie, set up
Picklehead Pickles in June 2012 using base recipes from Mikey's mother. They
began small-scale commercial production of three types of pickle in 2015.

WHAT Lebanese cucumbers are cut into quarters lengthways, rather than sliced
into rounds, for maximum crunch; cucumbers and dill are sourced locally via
Rocklea Markets and from market gardens in Brisbane's outer suburbs; birdseye
chillies come from a local Vietnamese grower. The pickles are made with an
apple cider vinegar base and the Hilburgers also make Get Out Kraut, a naturally
fermented sauerkraut.

WHY All Picklehead's principal ingredients are sourced from Queensland, no artificial additives are used and the pickles are also unpasteurised. "All three pickles have very different flavours," says Hilburger, "but they all share the same ingredients, just with different levels of garlic, chilli and peppercorn." He says chewing a Bronx Vanilla (New York diner slang for garlic) is a little like wrestling an Italian, but his New York-style dill pickles are better behaved. The Hot Patootie is perhaps more self-explanatory.

WHERE Picklehead Pickles supplies two-litre jars to local Brisbane craft-beer venues such as The Scratch in Milton and Paddington's Kettle & Tin, and they're also are on the menu at GOMA and Two Trees cafés, and Che Asado restaurant in South Brisbane. For 500ml jars, check facebook.com/pickleheadpickles for stockists. FIONA DONNELLY





dd an exotic flavour to everything from cocktails to cakes with The Essential Ingredient's dried Turkish rose petals (\$8.95). essentialingredient.com.au



JOHN SUSMAN, SEAFOOD GUY

Why does fish in restaurants so often taste better than what I cook at home? It's all about sourcing the best fish and handling it with the same care as good chefs do in their restaurants. Start by heading to your fishmonger with an open mind, let them advise you on the best fish on the slab that day and design your dish from there. Buy the fish whole, check that it has clear, protruding eves, red gills, a clean fresh seaweed aroma and is firm to the touch. Once you've selected the perfect specimen, don't let it anywhere near fresh water; the chemicals such

as iodine and chlorine will cause the protein to deteriorate and the fish will lose flavour, texture and moisture. If you aren't comfortable or inclined to dress and fillet the fish at home, ask your fishmonger to scale, gut and fillet the fish for you. Once it's dry-cut, keep it cold up until cooking, then make sure the cooking method is matched to the oil or fat content of the fish. Regardless of the type, don't use too much heat - the protein will split and the flesh will dry out. And never cook the fish through - it will continue cooking when removed from the heat. Be sure to rest your cooked fish before eating, allowing it to relax and the moisture to flow back evenly through the flesh. Last of all, remember that fish loves salt, but always salt after cooking to retain moisture.

CAFFÉ CULTURE Hey Italophiles, Nespresso has launched two limited-edition "Tribute" blends inspired by Milan (sweet, fruity) and Palermo (peppery, intense).

They're \$8.90 for 10 capsules from Nespresso boutiques and nespresso.com.



and priced \$10 for 375ml. tarrawarra.com.au



GIVE THANKS

Proceeds from Thankyou's food range (this muesli, for example) and body products go towards the funding of safe water, food and sanitation training in developing countries. You can shop and track the impact of your purchase at thankyou.co/projects.



CALENDAR

BONJOUR, SPRING Guillaume Brahimi takes over the pans at the Gourmet Institute this month. with a masterclass channeling the bistro cooking of Paris in the spring Catch him at Domayne Alexandria in Sydney on 9 September. Tickets \$60. eventopia.co/ aourmetinstitute

BURGER KING

Mad about burgers? Huxtaburger's **Daniel Wilson** drops in to The Essential Ingredient in Prahran on 19 September to lead a workshop on making restaurantquality burgers at home. You'll learn how to choose the right bun, prepare the meat and make pickles, sauces and accompaniments from scratch. Tickets \$195. essentialingredient

com.au **DEVIL YOU KNOW**

Some of Tasmania's finest eating and drinking is heading to the mainland. The Vin Diemen festival hits Sydney (it visited Brisbane and Melbourne last month) on 5 September, with more than 26 wine producers and Franklin's David Movle to provide the eats. Tickets \$35. winetasmania.com.

au/vin_diemen







September 1988...



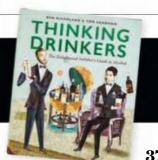
WE BAKED Chilli and corn muffins.



WE ATE Lobster salad.



WE VISITED Barcelona.



CEREBRAL SUP *In the brightly illustrated* Thinking Drinkers (\$43, Jacqui Small), UK drinks writers Ben McFarland and Tom Sandham guide you through the history and culture of more than 15 kinds of booze.







CONTACT

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New tricks

Appearances can be deceiving at Lûmé, which means our next reader dinner promises to be a fun evening.

> "Sea corn and dairy cow", "meat hen in chamomile" - Shaun Quade and John Paul Fiechtner don't like to give too much away, judging by the menu at their new South Melbourne restaurant, Lûmé.

"We're a fine-dining restaurant, but I hate calling it that," says Quade. "We like playing around with people's perceptions a little more than what's expected."

Technique and imagination are the most valuable players at Lûmé, which should come as no surprise, given the time Quade clocked at Quay and Biota, and Fiechtner spent at Le Chateaubriand in Paris and Hong Kong's Bo Innovation.

"A lot of people are scared of technique-driven food," says Fiechtner. "For us flavour always comes first, and then we play around with it."

For this month's Fine Dining Lovers' reader dinner, Lûmé presents a five-course tasting menu (with a few surprises in between), alongside matching wines chosen by sommelier Sally Humble.

A dish of emu and pearl is a playful start, with pearl meat mimicking a dinosaur's egg, the emu cured with salt and miso. Chamomile-brined chicken is up next, followed by Lûmé's "more Australian" version of a deconstructed black pudding, using lamb's blood along with native Tanami apples and their skins. And to end the evening? A simple piece of nutmeg, of course. Well, we wouldn't be too sure. Join us for dinner at 6.30pm on Monday 28 September at Lûmé, 226 Coventry St, South Melbourne, Vic. The cost of \$150 per person includes five-plus courses, wines by the glass, Sanpellegrino water and a \$10 donation to the Ovarian Cancer Research Foundation. To book, call (03) 9690 0142. For more on the OCRF, call 1300 OVARIAN or visit ocrf.com.au.

LÛMÉ

- * Sour brioche
- * Spelt pretzel
- * Emu and pearl Uehara Shuzo "Soma no Tengu" Usunigori, Shiga, Japan
- * Sea corn and dairy cow 2011 Bannockburn Chardonnay, Geelong
 - * Artichoke and praline
 - * Meat hen cooked in chamomile 1999 Nakano BC "Chokyu" Koshu, Wakayama, Japan
 - * Lamb's blood ganache Custard & Co barrel-aged, special-release apple cider liqueur
 - * Artichoke and praline
 - * Cacao pod from Maralumi Simão & Co Vintage Fortified, Rutherglen
 - * A simple piece of nutmeg



FINE TECHNIQUE

Above from left: Lûmé; chefs John Paul Fiechtner and Shaun Quade: "meat hen" cooked in chamomile



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PARCEL POST

Mandu, gnocchi, speckknödel and more. Hop online for some of our favourite bite-sized parcels from around the globe, including Korean, Chinese and Italian favourites.



VEG OUT

Kick off spring by firing up the barbecue and trying our two-dozen recipes for vegetables (grilled corn with chilli salt, burrata with char-grilled eggplant) cooked on the grill.

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in this issue

SCOOP Check out our restaurant critics' hot new picks. Turn to page 34.

SHOP Keep it quick and easy. See **page 55** for a shopping list for our Gourmet Fast recipes and pick up our Gourmet Fast app with up to 140 recipes.

CONNECT Get the full menus or contact this month's reviewed restaurants, Melbourne's Lûmé (page 73) and Bennelong in Sydney (page 77), at the touch of a fingertip.

BOOK Secure your place at this month's reader dinner at Lûmé, Melbourne (page 40).

WATCH Emma Knowles makes the siu mai on our cover (page 62), go behind the scenes at GT's 2016 Restaurant Awards (page 113), Peter Gilmore gives a tour of the new Bennelong (page 77) and Mat Pember harvests spring onions (page 64).



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Get some new-season inspiration for midweek meals with our collection of more than 20 fast and flavoursome recipes you can have on the table in under 30 minutes.



Emma Knowles makes the siu mai on our cover, take a look behind the scenes at our Restaurant Awards event, Peter Gilmore gives a tour of Bennelong restaurant and learn how to harvest spring onions.

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— Eva Mendes, Hollywood Actress, 6 Times ALMA Awards Nominee

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"I love Stillwater's kingfish. May I please have the recipe so I can try it at home?"

Paul Shine, Launceston, Tas

Torched kingfish with kimchi mayo, charred onion and black sesame oil

Prep time 40 mins, cook 2½ hrs Serves 6

- White onion, quartered, pieces separated Grapeseed oil, for roasting and frying
- 25 gm sushi rice, rinsed
- 1 small witlof, leaves separated
- 300 gm sashimi-grade yellow tail kingfish, cut across the grain into 5mm slices
- 50 ml white soy sauce (see note)
- 1 tbsp black sesame oil (see note)
- 25 gm (1 cup) baby mizuna Kimchi mayonnaise
- 1 egg
- 2 tbsp kimchi
- 2 tsp rice vinegar
- ½ tsp Dijon mustard
- ½ small garlic clove
- 120 ml grapeseed oil
- 14 tsp sambal oelek
- **1** Preheat oven to 220C. Toss onion with 1 tsp grapeseed oil and roast on an oven tray until blackened (25-30 minutes). Cool (it will be brittle), then grind to ash in a spice grinder or with a mortar and pestle.
- **2** Reduce oven to 55C or lowest setting. Add sushi rice to a saucepan of boiling water, bring back to the boil, then reduce heat to low-medium and simmer until slightly overcooked (15-20 minutes). Drain, refresh under cold water, drain well and spread on an oven tray lined with baking paper. Place in oven until dry but pliable (1½-2 hours).
- **3** Heat 3cm oil to 180C in a deep saucepan and fry rice in 2 batches, stirring, until crisp but not

coloured (15 seconds). Remove with a skimmer, shake off excess oil and cool on paper towels.

- **4** For kimchi mayonnaise, soft-poach egg, drain, cool briefly, then blend in a small food processor with kimchi, vinegar, mustard and garlic to combine. Gradually add grapeseed oil in a steady stream until incorporated and thickened. Add sambal and season to taste.
- **5** Place witlof in iced water to crisp (2 minutes), then pat dry. Place kingfish on a metal tray and blowtorch one side to just char. Arrange on serving plates with witlof, season with salt, white soy sauce and sesame oil. Dot with kimchi mayo, scatter with mizuna, puffed rice and a little charred onion powder and serve.

Note White soy sauce is available from Japanese grocers. Black sesame oil is available online from Santos Organics (santostrading.com.au). If it's unavailable use white sesame oil.

"Tipo 00's pappardelle is addictive – can you share the secret recipe?"

Helen Marshall, Albert Park, Vic

Pappardelle with braised rabbit, marjoram and hazelnuts

Prep time 40 mins, cook 2% hrs (plus resting, cooling, drying)

Serves 6 (pictured p46)

- 1 rabbit (about 1.5kg), jointed (see note)
- 50 gm (1/3 cup) plain flour
- 100 ml olive oil
- 1 large onion, finely chopped
- 250 ml dry white wine
- 2 garlic cloves, finely chopped
- 1 small fresh bay leaf
- 4 marjoram sprigs
- 1.5 litres (6 cups) chicken stock

- 75 gm finely grated parmesan
- 100 gm roasted hazelnuts, coarsely crushed
- 50 gm butter, diced Hazelnut oil, for drizzling **Pasta dough**
- 250 gm (1½ cups) "00" flour
- 250 gm durum wheat semolina (see note)
- 220 gm eggs (about 4 eggs)
- 1 Preheat oven to 140C. Heat a large flameproof casserole over medium-high heat. Season rabbit and dust with flour, shaking off excess. Add oil to pan, and brown rabbit in batches (3-4 minutes). Set aside. Reduce heat to medium, add onion to pan and sauté until translucent (4-5 minutes). Add wine, garlic, bay leaf and half the marjoram, increase heat to high and reduce wine by half (2-3 minutes). Add stock, bring to a simmer, season to taste and return rabbit to pan. Cover and braise in oven until meat is almost falling off the bone (1½-1¾ hours). Remove lid and stand to cool slightly (30 minutes).
- 2 Meanwhile, for pasta dough, mix ingredients in an electric mixer fitted with a dough hook on low speed until dough comes together (4-5 minutes). Turn out onto a bench, knead into a ball (dough will be quite dry), then divide in 2, wrap in plastic wrap and refrigerate for 1 hour to rest.
- **3** Flatten a piece of dough at a time and roll through a pasta machine, starting at widest setting, rolling and folding until smooth, then continue, reducing settings notch by notch, until pasta is 2mm thick. Dust with flour, cut into 2cm-wide, 25cm-long strips and hang to dry for 1 hour.
- 4 Pass rabbit sauce through a fine sieve into a frying pan and reduce over high heat to 300ml (15-20 minutes). Shred meat and add to sauce.
- **5** Cook pasta in a large saucepan of boiling well-salted water until al dente (2-3 minutes). Drain, add to sauce with parmesan, hazelnuts, butter and remaining marjoram, and toss over medium heat until sauce coats pasta. Serve drizzled with hazelnut oil and scattered with parmesan.

Note You may need to order a rabbit from your butcher; ask them to joint it into 8 pieces. Durum wheat semolina is available from Italian delis, or online from Bellata Gold (bellatagold.com.au).

"How do I recreate Mr Wong's fabulous pork hock?"

Sam Sharp, Kensington, NSW

Crisp sweet and sour pork hock

Start this recipe a day ahead to press the pork.

Prep time 1 hr, cook 6 hrs (plus setting)

Serves 6 as part of a banquet (pictured p47)

Vegetable oil, for deep-frying Fried shallots, thinly sliced spring onions and long red chillies, coriander, and steamed rice, to serve

Red-cooked pork hocks

200 ml each Shaoxing wine and soy sauce

- 60 gm rock sugar, crushed (see note)
- 25 gm (5 cm piece) ginger, coarsely chopped
- 5 star anise
- 1 piece cassia bark

- 2 spring onions, coarsely chopped
- 3 pork hocks (about 3kg) Sweet and sour sauce
- ½ onion, coarsely chopped
- 3 small garlic cloves
- 15 gm ginger, coarsely chopped
- 25 ml fish sauce
- 250 gm caster sugar
- 75 ml Chinese red vinegar
- 50 gm Chinese yellow bean sauce
- 75 ml tomato sauce
- 1 For red-cooked pork hocks, bring ingredients except pork hocks and 4.5 litres water to the boil in a saucepan. Add hocks, reduce heat to low and simmer until hocks are soft and gelatinous (5 hours). Place hocks on a tray. When cool enough remove bones and knuckle, trying not to break up the meat and skin. Discard bones and stock.
- **2** Line a 5cm-deep 20cm x 30cm tray with baking paper and spread pork evenly in tray. Top with a sheet of baking paper, then another tray to fit inside the first, weight with food cans and refrigerate overnight to set.
- **3** For sweet and sour sauce, blend onion, garlic and ginger in a small food processor to a fine paste, using some fish sauce to blend if necessary. Set aside. Stir sugar and 100ml water in a wide saucepan over medium-high heat to dissolve, brush edges with a wet pastry brush to remove sugar crystals and cook without stirring until light caramel (5-6 minutes). Add remaining ingredients and reserved paste and simmer to a thick glaze (2-3 minutes). Makes about 2 cups. Sauce will keep refrigerated for a month.
- **4** Cut pressed pork into 2cm cubes. Heat oil in a large wok or deep-fryer to 180C and deep-fry 10 pieces of pork at a time, loosening them from the bottom with a metal spatula, until crisp and golden (2-3 minutes). Drain on paper towels, then toss in sweet and sour sauce (about ½ cup) and serve scattered with fried shallots, spring onion, chilli and coriander alongside steamed rice. **Note** Rock sugar is available from Chinese supermarkets.

"I'd love to finish every meal with Rockpool's floating island. Can we have the recipe?"

Alex Hunt, Cammeray, NSW

Malt beer floating islands with macadamia and chocolate wheat cream

The Rockpool kitchen serves these with a toasted-oat ice-cream. The recipe makes more biscuits than you'll need here, but they keep for two weeks.

Prep time 1 hr 15 mins, cook 40 mins (plus infusing, resting, chilling)

- Makes 6
- 125 gm eggwhites (about 4)
- 50 ml dark ale, such as Irish stout
- 30 gm caster sugar, plus extra for dusting Macadamia and chocolate wheat cream
- 55 gm (¼ cup) farro (see note)
- 175 ml pouring cream

- ½ tsp liquid glucose
- 1/3 titanium-strength gelatine leaf, softened in cold water for 5 minutes
- 55 gm Valrhona Kalingo chocolate (65% cocoa solids; see note), finely chopped
- 55 gm Valrhona Jivara chocolate (40% cocoa solids; see note), finely chopped
- 75 ml milk, warmed
- 25 gm macadamia nuts
- 25 gm pure icing sugar Speculoos biscuits
- 90 gm unsalted butter, softened
- 35 gm brown sugar
- 30 gm caster sugar
- ½ tsp honey
- 75 gm (½ cup) steamed bun flour (see note)
- 50 (1/3 cup) gm plain flour
- 1/8 tsp bicarbonate of soda
- 1 For wheat cream, preheat oven to 180C. Roast farro on an oven tray, stirring once, until golden (8-10 minutes). Cool briefly, then place in a small saucepan over medium heat with cream and heat, stirring continuously, until mixture reaches 85C (2-3 minutes). Set aside to infuse for 20 minutes. Strain into a saucepan, add glucose, and stir over medium heat until it reaches 90C (2-3 minutes). Squeeze excess water from gelatine and add to cream with chocolates, turn off heat and stir gently until smooth (2 minutes). Add milk, place in a bowl over iced water and cool, stirring occasionally. Reduce oven to 160C. Roast macadamias until golden (8-10 minutes). Cool briefly, then process

- with icing sugar and a pinch of salt in a small food processor to a smooth paste. Stir 1-2 tbsp into sauce just before serving.
- 2 For biscuits, beat butter, sugars, honey and ½ tsp fine sea salt in an electric mixer until pale. Sift in flours and bicarbonate of soda, mix to combine, then roll between sheets of baking paper to 15cm x 20cm. Chill until firm (30-40 minutes). Cut out 2.5cm rounds, place on a baking tray lined with baking paper and bake until golden (6-7 minutes).
- **3** Increase oven to 200C. Butter six 125ml metal dariole moulds and dust with caster sugar. Whisk eggwhites and ale in an electric mixer to combine, then gradually add sugar and whisk until stiff peaks form. Transfer to a piping bag (no nozzle), pipe into moulds and smooth tops. Place in a roasting pan lined with a tea towel, pour in boiling water to halfway up sides of moulds and bake until puffed and golden (6-8 minutes). Remove from bath, cool to room temperature, then refrigerate until chilled (1-2 hours).
- **4** Turn floating islands out onto a foil-lined tray, scatter tops evenly with caster sugar and caramelise with a blowtorch. Spoon chocolate cream onto plates, place an island on each, and serve with biscuits.

Note Farro is a wheat grain available from select delicatessens and Italian grocers. Valrhona chocolate is available from select delicatessens. Steamed bun flour is available from select supermarkets and Asian food stores.



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Quick meals

Make midweek meals fast and hassle-free with these dishes by *Lisa Featherby* designed to the table in no time.

- 1 Sichuan-style boiled beef with rice
- 2 Udon noodle soup with shiitake mushrooms and tofu
- 3 Lamb kofta wraps with parsley and onion salad
- 4 Penne with prawns and fra diavolo sauce
- 5 Pan-fried barramundi with eggplant and miso purée
- 6 Cucumber and quinoa salad with ocean trout and yoghurt
- Z Grilled chicken wings with nahm jim
- 8 Broccoli, feta and anchovy fillo pie
- 9 Blueberry cobbler with ice-cream

Sichuan-style boiled beef with rice (RECIPE P52)

SICHUAN BEEF

Tam bowls and Nolan Graphite cutlery from Country Road. All other props stylist's own. Stockists p199. 300 gm piece of hanger steak, thinly sliced against the grain

- 60 ml (1/4 cup) Shaoxing wine
- tbsp vegetable oil
- 10 gm ginger, cut into julienne
- 2 tsp Sichuan peppercorns
- tbsp dark soy sauce 2
- tbsp chilli bean paste
- tbsp Sichuan chilli oil (see note) Steamed long-grain rice and thinly sliced spring onions, to serve
- Combine beef and a third of the Shaoxing in a owl and set aside. Heat oil in a wok until smoking, dd beef and stir-fry until just starting to colour 1-2 minutes). Transfer to a plate and set aside. Add ginger and peppercorns to wok and stir-fry until ust fragrant (20-30 seconds), then add soy sauce, i bean paste, chilli oil and remaining Shaoxing, nd stir-fry until just combined (1 minute). Return ef to wok, toss to combine, then serve on steamed rice and scatter with spring onions. Note We used Lao Gan Ma Sichuan chilli oil, available from Asian supermarkets and grocers.

Udon noodle soup with shiitake mushrooms and tofu

- 10 (20gm) dried shiitake mushrooms
- 12 gm (2 packets) dashi powder (see note)
- 920 gm fresh udon noodles
- 100 ml light soy sauce, or to taste
- 1½ tsp finely grated ginger
- 1 tsp sesame oil, or to taste
- 300 gm silken tofu, cut into 2cm cubes Thinly sliced spring onion and daikon, to serve
 - Shichimi togarashi, to season (see note)

1 Bring shiitake, dashi powder and 1.2 litres cold water to the boil in a saucepan over high heat. Remove from heat and stand for shiitake to rehydrate (5 minutes).

- 2 Meanwhile, blanch noodles in a large saucepan of boiling water until just softened (1-2 minutes),
- **3** Return stock to high heat and bring to the simmer, add soy sauce, ginger and sesame oil to taste, then ladle over noodles. Top with tofu, spring onion and daikon, season to taste with shichimi togarashi and serve.

Note Dashi powder and shichimi togarashi, a Japanese spice blend, are both available from Japanese and Asian grocers.

Lamb kofta wraps with parsley and onion salad

Buy semi-lean lamb that's coarsely minced from a butcher instead of the supermarket - the quality of your meatballs will be better for it.

- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 4 pita bread rounds Hummus, to serve

Lamb kofta

500 gm minced lamb

- 1 small onion, finely chopped
- 1 garlic clove, crushed
- ½ tsp each coarsely ground cumin and
- 1/4 tsp cayenne pepper

Parsley and onion salad

- 2 cups torn flat-leaf parsley
- 1 cup each torn coriander and mint
- ½ Spanish onion, thinly sliced Juice of 1 lemon
- 1 tbsp olive oil Large pinch of sumac
- 1 For lamb kofta, mix ingredients and ½ tsp sea salt flakes in a bowl to combine. Roll into 12 even-sized balls and set aside on a tray.
- 2 Heat oil in a large non-stick frying pan over medium heat and fry meatballs, turning occasionally, until golden-brown and just cooked through (6-8 minutes).
- 3 Meanwhile, heat a char-grill pan over high heat and cook pita bread 2 at a time, turning once, until just charred (1 minute each side). Wrap in a clean dry tea towel to keep warm and steam.
- 4 For salad, combine ingredients in a bowl.
- **5** To serve, spread warm pita bread with hummus, add lamb kofta, scatter with salad and roll to wrap.

+ Penne with prawns and fra diavolo sauce

Fra diavolo, "brother devil" in Italian, is a spicy sauce for pasta or seafood. Ramp up the heat with extra chilli if you like.

Serves 4

500 gm dried penne

- 60 ml (¼ cup) olive oil
- 3 garlic cloves, finely chopped
- 1 tbsp rosemary
- 24 uncooked prawns, peeled, deveined and coarsely chopped
- 3 birdseye chillies, or to taste, finely chopped
- 600 gm tomato polpa

Coarsely chopped flat-leaf parsley, to serve Toasted crumbs

- 80 gm sourdough crumbs
- 20 gm butter
- 1½ tbsp olive oil
- 1 garlic clove, crushed
- 1 Cook penne in a saucepan of well-salted boiling water until al dente (10-14 minutes), then drain, reserving a little pasta water.
- 2 Meanwhile, for toasted crumbs, combine ingredients except garlic in a large deep frying pan over medium heat until toasted, stirring in garlic in the last minute (4-5 minutes). Transfer to a plate and wipe out pan.
- **3** Heat olive oil in pan over medium heat, sauté garlic and rosemary until fragrant (1-2 minutes), then add prawns and chillies and stir until just starting to turn opaque (1 minute). Add polpa, bring to a simmer, season to taste and simmer until sauce is well flavoured, and prawns are cooked (2-3 minutes).
- 4 Add pasta to sauce, toss to combine and scattered with toasted crumbs and parsley.

Pan-fried barramundi with eggplant and miso purée

The purée here is made with boiled eggplant, so it's super-quick to make and has a lovely creamy texture. The addition of miso gives it a lovely deep flavour, which works well with the barramundi.

Serves 4

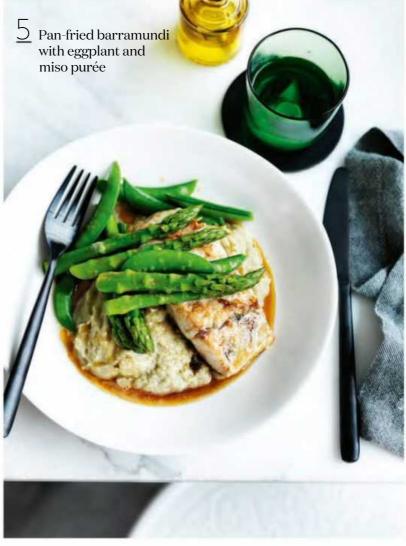
- 1 tbsp grapeseed oil
- 4 barramundi fillets (about 200gm each)
- 40 gm butter
 - 1 tbsp lemon juice Steamed vegetables, such as sugar snaps and asparagus, to serve
 Eggplant and miso purée

- large eggplant (350gm each), peeled and
- Juice of 1 lemon, plus extra to season 1½ tbsp white miso (shiro miso)
- 50 gm butter
- 2 tbsp light soy sauce, or to taste>

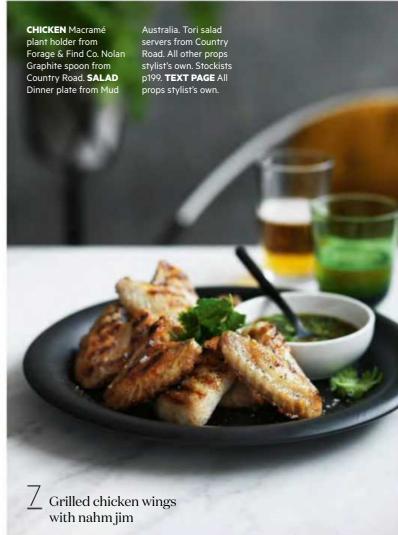
















- 1 For purée, bring a large saucepan of water to the boil, add eggplant and lemon juice, and boil until tender (5 minutes). Drain well in a colander (5 minutes), then transfer to a blender with remaining ingredients and blend until smooth. Season to taste with soy sauce and lemon juice, stir well and cover with foil to keep warm.
- 2 Meanwhile, heat oil a large non-stick frying pan over medium-high heat, season barramundi and fry skin-side down until golden (3-4 minutes). Add butter and lemon to pan, turn barramundi and fry, basting occasionally, until golden-brown and just cooked through (3-4 minutes). Serve with eggplant and miso purée, top with steamed vegetables and pour pan juices over.

Cucumber, radish and quinoa salad with ocean trout and yoghurt

Serves 4-6

200 gm quinoa

800 gm radishes, trimmed and quartered

- 2 Lebanese cucumbers, peeled and diced
- 1 cup (firmly packed) mint, coarsely chopped Juice of 1 lemon, to taste
- 60 ml (1/4 cup) extra-virgin olive oil
- 12 slices cold smoked ocean trout Watercress sprigs, to garnish
- 120 gm Greek-style yoghurt, to serve
- 1 Cook quinoa in a saucepan of boiling water until tender (8-10 minutes). Drain well, then spread on a tray to cool and steam dry (15 minutes).
- 2 Combine radish and cucumber in a bowl, add mint and quinoa, and toss to combine. Whisk lemon juice and oil in a separate bowl, season to taste, then add to quinoa and mix well.
- **3** Arrange ocean trout on serving plates, top with cucumber salad, scatter with watercress sprigs and serve with yoghurt.

7 Grilled chicken wings with nahm jim

Give these wings a good charring when you grill them – it adds another level of flavour.

Serves 6 as a snack or shared dish

- 1 kg chicken wings
- 1 tbsp fish sauce Nahm iim
- 1 garlic clove, coarsely chopped
- 4 birdseye chillies, coarsely chopped
- 20 gm light palm sugar
- 60 ml (¼ cup) each fish sauce and lime juice (about 3 juicy limes), or to taste
- 1½ tbsp coarsely chopped coriander, plus extra leaves to garnish
- 1 Preheat oven to 225C and heat a char-grill pan or barbecue to medium heat. Toss chicken in fish sauce, then grill, turning occasionally, until almost cooked through and well charred (15 minutes). Transfer to an oven tray and roast until chicken is cooked through (10 minutes; if using a barbecue, transfer to a disposable foil tray and close the lid on the barbecue).

- 2 Meanwhile, for nahm jim, pound garlic and a pinch of salt with a mortar and pestle to a fine paste. Add chilli and pound to a coarse paste, add sugar and pound to combine, then stir in fish sauce and lime juice to taste, and chopped coriander.
- **3** Scatter chicken wings with coriander and serve with nahm jim dipping sauce.

Broccoli, feta and anchovy fillo pie

Bring the fillo to room temperature as you prepare the filling for this pie – it can become brittle if it's too cold – keeping it covered with a slightly damp tea towel to prevent it drying out.

Serves 6

- 90 gm butter, melted
- ½ onion, diced
- 500 gm broccoli florets, coarsely chopped
- 10 fillo pastry sheets
- 80 gm Danish feta, coarsely crumbled
- 5 anchovy fillets, finely chopped Mesclun salad, dressed with a red wine vinaigrette, to serve
- 1 Preheat oven to 230C and line a baking tray large enough to fit a fillo sheet with baking paper. Heat 1 tbsp butter in a large frying pan over high heat, sauté onion until just tender (2-3 minutes), then add broccoli and 60ml water (be careful of steam). Cover with a lid and cook until broccoli is bright green (2 minutes).
- 2 Meanwhile, place a sheet of fillo on prepared tray, brush with melted butter, then place another sheet on top. Repeat with 4 fillo sheets (so you have 6 altogether). Butter and layer remaining 4 fillo sheets separately and set aside. Spoon broccoli mixture over fillo on tray, leaving a 5cm border, then scatter feta and anchovies evenly on top. Place reserved fillo on top, roll up edges to seal, brush edges with butter and bake until golden-brown (10-15 minutes). Serve with salad.

Blueberry cobbler with ice-cream

Cobbler is an American dessert similar to a crumble but with a shortcrust top. This version with blueberries is wonderful, but you could use any berry you like, or add some sliced rhubarb for extra tartness.

Serves 6

375 gm blueberries

40 gm caster sugar
Juice of ½ lemon
Vanilla ice-cream to serve

Shortcrust top

- 90 gm plain flour
- 90 gm butter, coarsely chopped
- 50 gm caster sugar
- 1 Preheat oven to 250C. Stir blueberries, sugar, lemon juice and 2 tbsp hot water in a 1- or 1.5-litre baking dish and set aside.
- **2** For shortcrust top, process ingredients in a food processor until balls of dough form. Turn out onto a lightly floured surface and

knead to just bring together, then roll between sheets of baking paper to the size and shape of your baking dish so that it neatly covers blueberry mixture. Poke holes through pastry at intervals with your finger, then bake until golden and bubbling (18-20 minutes). Serve hot with ice-cream.

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FOR THE RECIPES FROM THIS EVENT VISIT HN.COM.AU/GOURMET-INSTITUTE





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CHEF

EMMA MCCASKILL & SCOTT HUGGINS

TOPIC

THE NEW KIDS ON THE BLOCK

LOCATION

HARVEY NORMAN, 750 MAIN NORTH RD, GEPPS CROSS, SA

DATE & TIME

7PM, WEDNESDAY 30 SEPT

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Burghul

The hero of the classic Middle-Eastern tabbouleh, this grain gives true grit to soups and pilafs.

Burghul, or bulgur, is a grain produced from wheat berries. It's sold parboiled then dried and comes in a range of grades, from finely cracked through to medium and coarse. The most common types we find in Australia are the fine-grit and coarse-grit burghul. You'll find it at Middle Eastern, Turkish or Greek grocers.

Because it's partly cooked, burghul makes a great pantry item; it's quick to prepare, especially the fine variety, which only needs to be soaked. If you like the grains light and fluffy, boil the bulgur briefly, then spread the grains out on a tray to dry so the dish you're making doesn't become soggy. Give the burghul a quick rinse before cooking or soaking to remove any dirt and excess starch.

The coarser variety needs to be cooked, but it takes less than half an hour.

A Middle Eastern staple, burghul goes well with lamb; kibbeh is the Lebanese classic dish of minced lamb and burghul. It's great in salads as well as soups and stuffing, especially with dried fruit and nuts to enhance its nutty flavour.

Tabbouleh is probably the most well-known burghul dish; in our version here, we've added ripe tomatoes and lemon juice to the grain with just a little water so the flavour of the tomatoes isn't too diluted.

Tabbouleh Serves 8-10 as a side

Combine 150gm rinsed fine burghul with 5 very ripe diced tomatoes, juice of 1/2 lemon and 60ml cold water in a bowl. Stand until liquid is absorbed and burghul is tender (11/2 hours). Add 2 diced Lebanese cucumbers, 2 cups coarsely chopped flat-leaf parsley, 1 cup coarsely chopped mint, 1 crushed garlic clove, juice of 2 lemons and 150ml extra-virgin olive oil. Season to taste, toss well and serve.

Chicken, voghurt, lemon and burghul soup Serves 6

Bring 2 litres chicken stock and 1.25 litres water to the boil in a large saucepan, add a 1.5kg chicken, bring back to the boil, boil for 5 minutes, then turn off heat, cover and set aside until chicken is cooked through and cooled (2-3 hours). Remove chicken and shred meat. Meanwhile, cook 180gm fine burghul in a saucepan of boiling water until tender (2 minutes). Drain and add to meat. Heat 2 tbsp olive oil in a large saucepan over medium heat, add 1 finely chopped onion and 1 finely chopped garlic clove and sauté, stirring occasionally, until softened (8-10 minutes). Add chicken stock and bring to a simmer, then stir in burghul and chicken, 250gm thick yoghurt and 1/4 cup coarsely chopped mint leaves, season to taste and serve with extra mint leaves and lemon juice, to taste.

Smoky burghul and prawn pilaf Serves 4

Heat 1 tbsp olive oil in a saucepan over high heat, add 1/2 finely chopped onion and ½ diced red capsicum and fry over medium heat until onion is tender (10 minutes). Add 1 tsp smoked paprika, 1/2 tsp ground cumin and stir until fragrant (10 seconds). Add 400gm coarse burghul, stir

to combine, then add 1 tbsp dry Sherry and 600ml chicken stock, reduce heat to medium, cover and cook until burghul is tender (12-16 minutes), adding 16 uncooked prawns in last 5 minutes of cooking. Add 2 tbsp coarsely chopped flat-leaf parsley, season to taste and serve with a squeeze of lemon and aïoli and grilled crusty bread to the side.

Burghul with charred Roman beans and feta

Serves 4 as a light meal

Boil 90gm fine burghul in a large saucepan of salted water until tender (2 minutes). Drain well and spread out on a tray to dry (15 minutes), then combine in a bowl with 1/3 finely chopped Spanish onion, 1 finely chopped jalapeño and ½ cup finely chopped dill. Toss 12 Roman beans in 2 tbsp olive oil and grill on a hot barbecue, turning until blistered (3-4 minutes). Coarsely chop beans and combine in a bowl with the juice of 1 lemon and 21/2 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil and add to salad, season to taste and serve scattered with crumbled goat's feta.

SOUP Bowl in slate from Mud Australia. Spoon from Country Road. Marble bowl from Forage & Find Co. All other props stylist's own. Stockists p199.



+ Fine burghul is great in a salad, and holds up well if you make it a day ahead of serving. Just add a little extra dressing to the salad the next day to freshen it up.

PHOTOGRAPHY WILLIAM MEPPEN **WORDS & RECIPES LISA FEATHERBY** STYLING LYNSEY FRYERS-HEDRICK





or more than 30 years, Milton de Jonge has been raising grass-fed beef on his property in the beautiful Cape Grim region of north west Tasmania, an area surrounded on three sides by the sea and characterised by emerald green hills. This grass is as much a part of the story of Cape Grim beef as the cattle. "It's not about the breed, it's about the feed," says de Jonge of his award-winning meat. "This area is ideal for agriculture because of the rich-red, basalt soil. We're in the path of the roaring forties – the cleanest air in the world – and we have good rainfall, which all contribute to producing quality grass." The grass is what

gives Cape Grim beef its flavour. "It's a natural flavour that comes through in the texture of the beef, too." Running 63 Murray Greys and Red Angus cows, de Jonge admits he's happy with his cows. "They suit me. They aren't high maintenance and they are lovely and quiet." Happy cows equal delicious meat. "We want to produce a product that our customers can rely on and we do that very well. It's great that my beef goes straight to my customers' door through Aussie Farmers Direct."

Shop for Milton's Cape Grim beef at AussieFarmers.com.au



Join us on Tuesday 29 September from 6:30pm at Stokehouse City, Melbourne. Tickets \$130 per person. To book, call (03) 9525 5555.



in association with Gourmet Traveller.

MENU

Tropical Sunset Rum and pineapple with coconut blossom sugar syrup

Chicken liver parfait, muscovado onion jam, apricot and walnut bread Pizzini Prosecco, King Valley, Vic

French caster sugar-cured ocean trout, crème fraîche, lemon, almonds, trout roe and asparagus with a lemon butter and dill emulsion Chalmers Greco, Heathcote, Vic

Western Plains pork Scotch fillet, apple purée, agave seeds, mustard leaf and pancetta Torbreck "Kyloe" Mataro, Barossa, SA

Panela panna cotta, burnt cinnamon custard, rapadura crunch and banana ice-cream Royal Tokaji Late-Harvest, Tokaji, Hungary



The chefs at Stokehouse have created a special menu to showcase the range and flavours of different types of sugar, from Australian Muscovado to Colombian Panela.

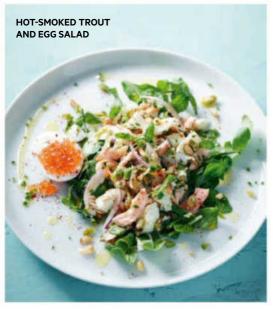


Available nationwide in Woolworths, Coles and select independent supermarkets. sugarsoftheworld.com



Spring forth

Salad days are here again and in keeping with the season **Pete Evans** has a light tasty trout number and a fruity pudding to finish.



and gently toss to combine, then transfer to serving plates. Add an egg half to each serving, top with roe, drizzle around extra dressing, sprinkle with a little sumac and serve.

Chia-seed puddings with blueberries, banana and goji berries

Prep time 15 mins (plus setting) Serves 4

- 140 gm coconut flesh (from 1-2 young coconuts, water strained through a fine sieve), coarsely chopped
- 250 ml (1 cup) coconut cream, plus extra, to serve
- 115 gm (1/3 cup) honey (preferably unfiltered raw), plus extra, to serve
- 100 gm white chia seeds (see note)
 - 2 small bananas, thickly sliced

- 125 gm (about 1 punnet) blueberries
- 30 gm (¼ cup) goji berries (see note) Cocoa nibs (optional; see note),
- **1** Blend coconut flesh in a food processor with 250ml coconut water until smooth. Pour into a bowl, add coconut cream, honey and chia seeds, mix well, then refrigerate until chia seeds swell and form a thick pudding with a slight crunch (2-2 ½ hours).
- 2 Spoon chia seed mixture into bowls, drizzle with a little extra coconut cream, top with sliced banana, blueberries, goji berries, cocoa nibs and a drizzle of honey, and serve.

Note White chia seeds, goji berries and cocoa nibs are available from supermarkets and health-food shops.

66 I love a seafood salad on the table, such as this trout and egg salad, about now. Eggs offer a high-quality source of protein, as well as amino acids and B vitamins. Fish roe provides omega-3 fatty acids, plus vitamin A for healthy skin, bones and vision, and B12 for generating blood cells and protecting nerves. For a simple dessert or breakfast, I look to chia-seed pudding with coconut, the fat of which is thought to have profound effects on health, including fat loss, brain function and antibacterial goodness. The chia seeds are wonderful for heart health and dietary fibre, plus I love the calcium, manganese,

phosphorus and

antioxidants they

provide. 99

Hot-smoked trout and egg salad

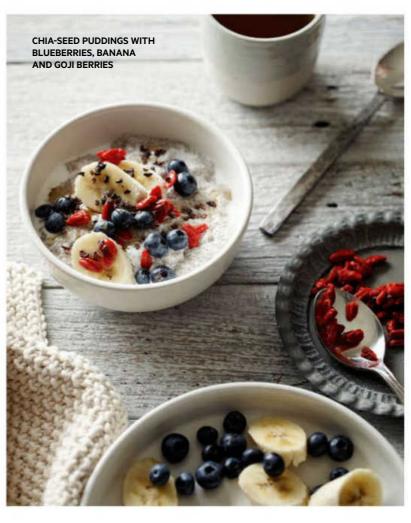
Prep time 20 mins, cook 10 mins

Serves 4 as an entrée or light meal

- 50 gm each walnuts and pine nuts
 - 4 eggs, at room temperature
 - 1 hot-smoked rainbow trout (350gm), skin and bones removed, flesh flaked (250gm)
 - 4 cups (loosely packed) baby rocket
 - ½ Spanish onion, thinly sliced
- 30 gm salmon roe Sumac, to serve

Lemon dressing

- 60 ml (¼ cup) extra-virgin olive oil
- 1½ tbsp lemon juice
 - 1 tsp each finely chopped chives and flat-leaf parsley
- 1 Preheat oven to 180C. Roast nuts on an oven tray, shaking occasionally, until golden-brown (4-5 minutes). Cool briefly, then coarsely chop and transfer to a large bowl.
- **2** Meanwhile, cook eggs in a saucepan of boiling water until medium-boiled (6 minutes). Refresh in a bowl of iced water, peel and set aside.
- **3** For lemon dressing, whisk olive oil and lemon juice in a bowl to combine, then stir in herbs and season to taste.
- **4** Add trout, rocket and onion to nuts. Halve eggs, coarsely chop four halves and add to salad. Add half the dressing





Siu mai

Firm favourites in the dumpling world, these dainty parcels are child's play to make, writes **Tony Tan**.

Among the most celebrated dumplings at any yum cha restaurant, siu mai (aka shumai) to a Chinese person is like a meat pie to an Aussie. And yet, like any meat pie, there are the good and the very ordinary siu mai. Open-topped steamed dumplings traditionally made with minced pork wrapped in wonton pastry and served in bamboo baskets, siu mai as we know

them in Australia and the West in general are from the Cantonese or Southern school.

Considered by the Cantonese to be one of the "big three" dim sum (the other two being char siu bao and har gau), siu mai apparently originated in the Inner Mongolian city of Hohhot. While this may be apocryphal, what is interesting is, having popped up in the city of Guangzhou (formerly Canton), how this delicious morsel travelled to Hong Kong and finally to the rest of the world.

To the Chinese, southern China, where Guangzhou is situated, has always been known as a region for excellent food. As such, Guangzhou enjoys the reputation throughout the country as to the go-to city for dim sum. Here, dim sum chefs have turned the making of these parcels into an art form. They were served to accompany tea, particularly in restaurants known as teahouses – cha lou.

After Hong Kong became a British colony in 1842, dim sum cooks migrated across the Pearl River Delta to work in humble teahouses and stalls in Sai Ying Pun, an area settled by the Chinese on the island. While the history of these simple teahouses is vague, legendary establishments such as Lin Heung (founded in Guangzhou in 1889) and Luk Yu (1933) teahouses have served siu mai along with other dumplings to this day. And it's from Hong Kong that dim sum chefs were recruited to work in Cantonese restaurants all over the world, hence the reputation of Hong Kong chefs.

Meaning "cook and sell", siu mai are easy to make. They're the first dumplings I made as a kid in Malaysia. The key is to create the "mouth-feel" or *hau gum*, which is important to this dumpling. It should have "bounce" in the mouth. Most yum cha restaurants typically use chopped pork only, with pork fat in the filling to give the characteristic bounciness. But I find some cheaper places use much more pork fat, which makes the dumpling less palatable. The best ratio I find is 80 per cent lean meat to 20 percent fat, so I often ask my butcher to mince pork belly for me.

To create that bounce factor, better restaurants now use a combination of pork





STEPS Grey linen apron from Stone. Lamson & Goodnow vintage chef's knife from Chef and The Cook. All other props stylist's own. Stockists p199.

and prawns. I've done so here, and with umami-packed shiitake, crunchy water chestnuts, a splash of soy sauce and Shaoxing wine, and potato flour and eggwhite as binding agents, the filling is quite delicious.

You can buy wonton wrappers or make your own. Traditionally, a long rolling pin is used when making wonton wrappers and noodles to roll the dough out on a large table; using a pasta machine is much quicker.

To form the siu mai, many dim sum chefs trim off the square edges of the wrappers for aesthetics, but this isn't necessary (we've left them square here). Next, I put a teaspoonful of the filling in the middle of the wrapper and then gather up the wrapper around it. The wrapper should fold naturally into pleats, although it's best to do this manually. Squeeze the sides gently to form a basket or cylinder, which ensures the wrapper will stick to the filling, then tap the dumpling bottom lightly to flatten it. While working with each dumpling, be sure to cover your wrappers with a damp tea towel to keep them from drying out.

When all the dumplings are made, decorate the tops with diced carrots, peas, goji berries or crab roe, the traditional garnish. Purists then place the dumplings on thinly sliced carrots to stop the bottoms from getting wet; I line my bamboo baskets with non-stick paper and prick a few holes in it for the steam to get through (you can also oil the baskets). When you're ready to eat, pop the dumplings

in the baskets and steam them for about 10 minutes. Serve them at once with your favourite dipping sauce, or without if you prefer – they're also delicious as they are.

Siu mai dumplings freeze well, which makes them perfect standbys. I always have them on hand in the freezer for when unexpected visitors arrive. They're of course great with Chinese tea and, I might add, a glass of Champagne, too.

Siu mai

Serve these with dipping sauces such as Chinkiang vinegar and soy sauce, and with julienned ginger.

Makes around 30

- 2 dried shiitake mushrooms, soaked in hot water for 1 hour
- 80 gm canned water chestnuts, chopped
- 2 tbsp finely chopped ginger
- 1 spring onion, thinly sliced
- 2 tbsp light soy sauce
- 1½ tbsp Shaoxing rice wine
- 2 tsp sesame oil
- 300 gm skinned and boned pork belly, coarsely chopped
- 180 gm raw prawns, peeled, coarsely chopped
 - 1 eggwhite
 - 2 tbsp potato flour Vegetable oil, for brushing Finely chopped carrot, to garnish Julienned ginger and dipping sauces (see above), to serve

Wonton wrappers

- 250 gm (1½ cups) plain flour, plus extra for dusting
- 1½ medium eggs, beaten



- **1** For wonton wrappers, sieve flour and 1 tsp salt into a bowl.
- **2** Add eggs and 75ml cold water and stir to form a dough.
- **3** Tip dough out onto a lightly floured bench and knead until smooth

(10 minutes). Transfer to a bowl, cover with plastic wrap and rest in a cool place for 1 hour.

- **4** Meanwhile, for the filling, squeeze excess water from shiitake, discard stems and chop finely. Place in a bowl with the chestnuts, ginger, spring onion, soy sauce, Shaoxing and sesame oil.
- **5** Add remaining ingredients except the carrot, mix well and set aside for 20 minutes to marinate.
- **6** Divide dough into 4 even portions. Working with a piece at a time and covering remaining dough with a damp cloth, dust with flour, flatten and pass through a pasta machine, starting at widest setting, rolling and folding until smooth, then reduce settings a notch at a time until you reach the last setting and dough is 2mm thick.
- **7** Cut dough into 9cm squares, dust with flour and cover with a damp cloth while rolling remaining dough.
- **8** Place 1 tsp of filling in the centre of each wrapper. Bring up the sides and gently squeeze into shape. Smooth filling on top with a knife and tap bottom gently on bench so it stands upright.
- **9** Put a pinch of carrot on top of the filling.
- **10** Lightly brush steamer with vegetable oil or line with a sheet of baking paper, then steam dumplings in batches until cooked through (8-10 minutes). Serve with julienned ginger and dipping sauces.

Straight shooters

Despite their name, spring onions are great growers year round, writes *Mat Pember*, but they're ideal for this tricky time in the garden.

The back of winter has been broken and spring is awakening. Think of September as the season's morning – as though it's just out of bed and yet to have coffee, spring is erratic, temperamental, and frankly a pain in the patch. Spring may be here, but not yet in all its glory.

Gardening purists, and anyone else who keeps an arbitrary track of time, argue that spring really takes hold in October, with this month more of a prelude. It's when we make the mental shift, rather than a physical one. But spring is also empowering. We've arrived. Kind of.

This month we profile a spring classic: hardy, fast-growing, and versatile in the kitchen, spring onions tick enough boxes to have you coming back for more. And that could be at any time of year — the spring onion could easily be named the autumn, winter and summer onion, too.

Although not overly fussy about their growing conditions, spring onions appreciate some basic requirements being met. And the better you can satisfy these needs, the better they'll grow. They will tolerate partially shaded spaces, for instance, but they thrive in sunny positions in a free-draining soil.

Before planting spring onions, prepare your patch with compost and slow-release chook manure. This should supply the spring onions with enough nutrition for the whole growing journey, which lasts anywhere from one to three months, depending on how you harvest (more on that later). Like with most vegetables, however, a fortnightly tonic of liquid seaweed extract will supplement your efforts that extra bit.

When planting from seed, form shallow trenches with the tip of your finger, spaced about five centimetres apart. The seeds are minuscule, so trickle them along the trenches every few centimetres. Inevitably some thinning will be required once the seedlings are large enough to handle.

Keep the patch damp but don't overdo it - too much water can dislodge the seeds and send them floating to an early demise. Juggle your watering routine with whatever rainfall spring throws up. This is one of the areas where the season can be erratic - it's statistically one of our wettest.

When you plant seedlings — our preferred method since they're so easy to transplant — you'll find spring onions show real grit and hardiness. Here, make a trench a few centimetres wide and a few deep and lay all the seedlings along the line, spaced three to five centimetres apart, with the root zones in the trench. Cover the roots with soil and water them in, with the seedlings still laid out flat. While it may seem awkward for the spring onions to be planted horizontally, after a day or two of water and light, they quickly find their feet.

Water the seedlings two to three times a week; more frequently if you're growing them in pots or when the weather heats up. After a month, your vertically challenged seedlings will be standing tall and proud, nearly all grown up. You can now start harvesting as you choose.

Rather than rip out the entire plant, roots and all, the sensible approach is to cut off the stems, leaving the hardy root zone in the ground, which means they can immediately refocus their efforts to growing another round of spring onions. This method of harvesting can be repeated until the plant becomes unpalatable – usually at the point when slime rather than water fills the inner core of the onion. At that point, remove the entire plant and move on to your next spring fling.

WHAT TO TEMPERATE ARTICHOKE ASPARAGUS CORIANDER CUCUMBER FENNEL PEAS PUMPKIN 🥏 TOMATO TURNIP ZUCCHINI viewa and a video on harvesting

gourmettraveller.com.au

ILLUSTRATIONS TOM BINGHAM & LAUREN HAIRE (PORTRAIT)

TIP OF THE MONTH: HOW TO HARVEST SPRING ONIONS

Harvesting techniques are normally taken for granted, but the way you pinch, cut, pull, rip, pick or plough the produce from your patch can affect it on many levels. It's the difference between sensible and overeager harvesting, and you learn what suits different crops best with experience and many mistakes along the way.

GROUND RULES No one would imagine there'd be much in common between mushrooms and spring onions (other than good chemistry in the kitchen), but when it comes to harvesting, similar principles apply to both. Rather than ripping them out entirely, it's best to cut both spring onions and mushrooms at the base of the stem. This allows

the plant to regenerate and extra flushes of produce will follow from the root zone that remains. The plant will re-shoot and be ready to go again in no time.

HEAD STARTS It makes sense to harvest this way when you can so you're not starting from scratch over and over again – you've got a head start on the next offering.



CREAMY

- CREATIVELY CRAFTED BY CASTELLO ---

A rich double cream cheese matured from the centre for a soft texture throughout.



Gaznates de coco y cajeta

Gaznates, or "windpipes", are named for their shape. These sweet pastries are sublime drizzled with cajeta, a goat's milk caramel popular in Mexico, where it's often served with fried plantains as a street-side snack.

Prep time 1 hr, cook 1 hr 15 mins (plus resting)

Makes about 24

300 gm (2 cups) plain flour

70 gm lard

50 ml brandy Vegetable oil, for deep-frying

1 egg white, lightly beaten

500 ml (2 cups) thickened cream

300 gm crème fraîche Flesh of ½ mature coconut, finely grated, to serve Cajeta

1/4 tsp bicarbonate of soda

500 ml (2 cups) goat's milk

500 ml (2 cups) milk

150 gm Mexican Agave Sugar

1 tbsp corn syrup

1 cinnamon quill

40 ml sweet apera

- 1 For cajeta, combine bicarbonate of soda and 1 tbsp goat's milk in a bowl and set aside. Bring milk, sugar, corn syrup, cinnamon and remaining goat's milk to the boil in a large saucepan over medium-high heat, stirring to dissolve sugar. Add bicarbonate of soda mixture and stir occasionally until bubbles die down and mixture begins to turn caramel (20-30 minutes; if mixture bubbles up too much, transfer to a larger pan), then reduce heat to low and stir continuously until caramel forms (10-15 minutes). Add apera and 75ml hot water, stir to dissolve, then strain through a coarse sieve. Thin to drizzling consistency with hot water if necessary, then set aside.
- 2 Combine flour and a pinch of salt in a bowl. Add lard, rub into flour with fingertips, then add brandy and enough water to make a soft dough (about 90ml). Turn out onto a work surface and knead to combine, transfer to a bowl, cover and set aside to rest (30 minutes).
- 3 Heat oil in a deep-fryer to 170C. Roll dough through a pasta machine, starting at widest setting, then reducing settings notch by notch until dough is 7cm-8cm wide and 3mm thick. Cut into pieces long enough to wrap around metal cannoli tubes with edges overlapping, then wrap tubes, brush edges of dough with egg white and press to seal. Repeat with remaining tubes and deep-fry in batches until golden (3-5 minutes). Drain on paper towels until cool enough to handle, slide pastries from cannoli tubes and set aside until cool.
- **4** Whisk cream and crème fraîche in a bowl to firm peaks, then transfer to a piping bag and pipe into pastries. Serve gaznates with cajeta and coconut for dipping.



LOVING AGAVE Discovered by the indigenous communities of Mexico, the amber nectar of the blue agave (Agave teauilana) is one and a half times sweeter than honey or cane sugar. On the palate, processed agave sugar is clean, lively and intense. What makes it so special in cooking is its ability to blend well with a wide range of ingredients, working with the other flavours rather than modifying them. And it dissolves easily in liquids, making it a versatile alternative to cane sugar.

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FIESTA TIME

Bringing family and friends together in celebration is an essential element of Mexican culture. And what better way to capture that spirit than by exploring their traditional desserts and snacks? Nothing gets guests to a table faster than platters laden with churros and chocolate, cajeta and flan de queso.

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ENTERTAIN

DULCE DELIGHT

Give your fresh crêpes and pastries the sweet gift of cajeta — a delicious silky syrup of sweetened caramelised milk. Traditionally made from goat's milk, it predates dulce de leche. The deep, rustic nutty flavour of cajeta is popular throughout Jalisco.



GET THE LOOKThe maiolica pottery of

Mexico is a wonderful source of inspiration for decorating your table, in particular the Talavera ceramics of Puebla.
Consider a white backdrop splashed with a palette of cobalt blues, sun-bright yellows and

brilliant lime greens.



FARM TO TABLE

Mexican Agave Sugar is made by drying the nectar extracted from the blue agave's piña this is the heart or "bowl" of the plant that remains once the spiky leaves have been removed. The piñas, which can weigh up to 90kg each, are sourced sustainably from organically certified farms throughout Jalisco. They are transported to the processing plant in Guadalajara, where they are milled and crushed to draw out the juice. This is then filtered and spray-dried to produce a fine granulated agave sugar. What arrives on the table is 250gm of fine white crystals guaranteed to add an intense hit of Mexican sweetness to your cooking.



PEARL OF THE WEST

The blue agave is a succulent native to the Jalisco region of western Mexico, where it flourishes in fields around the city of Guadalajara, 550km north-west of Mexico City. The spiky plant with its rosette of thick fleshy leaves has been harvested there for centuries. Legend has it the sweet nectar was first discovered when the heat of a violent thunderstorm suddenly converted the juice of the piña.



CHEERING FOR CHURROS

Churros are the popular pastries that are a breeze to make. Whip up some dough, squeeze it through a piping tube and immerse it in hot oil for a light, crisp treat. Mexican Agave Sugar is the magic dust that brings churros to life. Sprinkle them liberally with it, then serve them with warm chocolate sauce.



GRAND FINALE

Looking for a quick Mexican thrill to cap off a lovely meal? Set your stopwatch and have a crack at a flan de queso (cream cheese flan). This feather-light dessert, topped with homemade caramel sauce, can be on the table in a flash.



THIRST QUENCHERS

No one does refreshing sweet drinks like the Mexicans. Does a hibiscus-flavoured agua fresca excite your palate? Or an agave lime lemonade, perhaps? Just add Mexican Agave Sugar for the ultimate tangy-sweet refreshment.



SALTY SOLUTION

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Hello, good pie

A bit of mystery and a magical marriage of filling and crust make pies a source of joy, writes *Fergus Henderson*.

There's a slight naughtiness to pies and, of course, the happy rhyme: An apple pie without some cheese is like a kiss without a squeeze.

Over lunch, a group of us had a moment of publishing genius thinking up the next magazine of the moment: *Pie Quarterly.* With articles such as "What Does Pie Mean to You?" and "Pie of the Month", it pretty much writes itself. The centrefolds are custard pies, which are really only topless custard tarts. Like many great lunchtime ideas, the richer details had already started to fade by the time coffee and digestifs were served, but being a huge pie enthusiast I can't let the idea disappear without putting some of it down on paper to give you a little taste of its brilliance.

The power of pie! The mystery of what lies beneath the crust! I once sat next to a lady at dinner who, when the pies arrived at the table, revealed that she suffered from pie phobia. Her condition worsened every second that went by before the pie's filling was exposed, and only then could she compose herself. It's a bit like having a gimp in the larder, not knowing what's going on under that rubber onesie or, in the case of pie, its suet crust. I suffer from no such concerns. Bring out the gimp, I say.

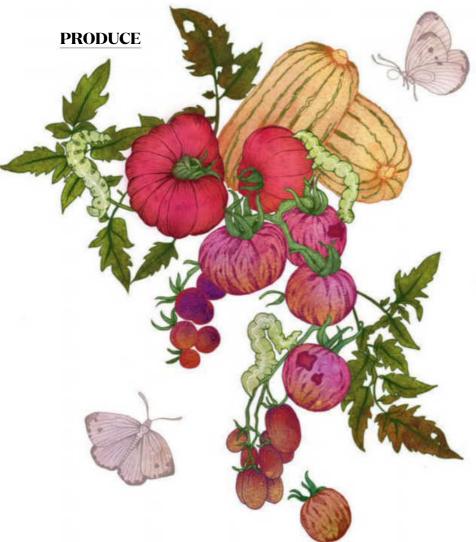
"Pies I've Known and Loved": there have been many. Trotter gear — that magical, alchemical substance made from cooking down trotters with aromatics and Madeira so dear to our hearts in the St John kitchens — comes into its own as the X-factor in game pies, adding more goodness to the pie and enhancing a thing of beauty. Pigeon and trotter pie, rabbit and trotter, grouse and trotter, hare and trotter! A central support of bone marrow, too, works similar magic here. The more prosaic-seeming beef mince pie comes into its own as a wonderful vehicle for mashed potato. And everything is excellent with a suet crust.

Then again, some pies lend themselves to a puff pastry top. Pike and leek pie is perhaps the prime example, the leeks bound with the pike in a silky fish velouté – the very last word in comfort food. And while I have the reassuring world of the white-sauce pie in mind, I have to make mention of the lesser-seen chicken and ox tongue pie – a true joy.

But the winner is the pig's head and potato pie. I came up with this for one of the World's 50 Best Restaurants lunches at St John. It is a thing of beauty, a delicious pie that perfectly expresses the idea of pie to many a decimal point. The interior is made up of layers of potato and chunks of cooked chopped pig's head, while the exterior is formed by lining a springform cake tin with puff pastry. This is then filled with a layer of head, then a layer of potato, repeated until it's full. One then pops the pastry lid on and bakes it till the potato is cooked (any residual crunch left in the potato being, of course, a disaster). When you're happy that it's done, you let it sit for five minutes, then release it from the tin. The transference of butter in the pastry and the fat from the pig's head transmogrifies the pastry crust into a thing of joy, and you should end up with something that looks like a large, golden ice-hockey puck.

Interestingly, at the 50 Best lunch, this pie confused one great visiting chef, who will remain unnamed to save justified embarrassment. He sliced the top off the pie with some verve, removed it and left it to one side. In one fell swoop, he transformed the glorious pie into a mere pastry bowl full of potato and pig's head. Who would have thought there could be such international discrepancy in the approach to pie?

I feel there is a slight naughtiness to pies. With the raunchy seaside-postcard genre in mind (and lest we forget what pie means in Glasgow), there is, of course, the happy rhyme: "An apple pie without some cheese is like a kiss without a squeeze."



Heirs apparent

Heritage plants are all the rage, but *Paulette Whitney* also has a keen eye on the burgeoning generations.

The scent of popcorn fills the house.

Matt, chef-turned-farmer — a mighty delicious combination to have around — is putting together the family meal. I wonder for a moment what on earth he thinks he's doing giving the kids popcorn before dinner when I realise the smell is coming from a baking tray filled with hot slices of golden, green-striped winter squash. The fragrant little squash he's just roasted goes by the name 'Candystick Dessert Delicata' and it is a game changer. Recently bred in Oregon, it's a modern riff on an heirloom classic, selected for its pie-sweet flesh and ease of cultivation. Pumpkin pies aside, I'm quite happy with what my farming chef has done: roasted it in a little bacon fat with plenty of salt, and letting it have its rightful place as star of the meal.

I'm telling you all of this because I've got a bee in my bonnet. If you wander around any farmers' market, or cast your eye over a restaurant menu, there's a good chance you'll find the word "heirloom" looking back at you. It conjures images of little envelopes of seeds wending their way through generations, smuggled into the country sewn into the hems of a migrant's skirts, or found in tiny, dusty jars at the back of a grandparent's

shed. But like many good words, I would suggest that the term "heirloom" has, sadly, been sold down the river. And I'm as guilty as anyone.

Last spring was when I sold out.

It seemed that every second visitor to our farmers' market stand wanted heirloom tomato plants. I had grown plenty of heirlooms, but also plants newly bred by scientists – varieties with far too many advantages to be cast aside simply because of their youth. One of the rejected seedlings was called 'Calmart', bred to ripen early – a must for cool climates – and to be resistant to blight, a disease that ravages tomato plants in humid years. But do you think I could sell seedlings? Not on your nelly. So most of these "modern" seedlings came back to our farm to be planted. And, as often happens on a cool mountainside in Tasmania, summer never came.

My tomato plants grew thin, wispy and sickly, and then the dreaded blight appeared. First, 'Tasmanian Yellow' succumbed, and 'Riesentraube', a stalwart German cherry usually utterly reliable, went under next, with many others to follow. The shining star among the few tomatoes that made it to harvest was our new kid on the block, 'Calmart', brightening the gloomy days with its pert little red orbs, waiting to fall, perfectly ripe, into a cupped hand.

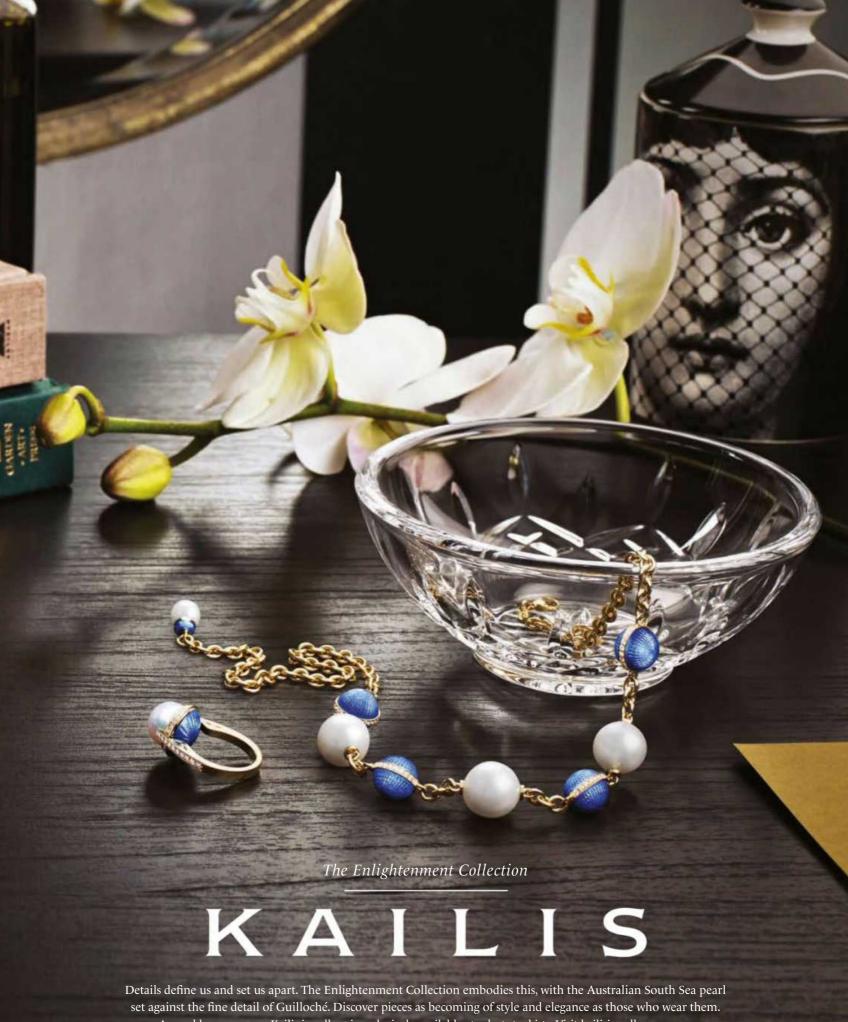
I'll grow it again next year, along with other shiny, new, modern varieties and all of my favourite heirlooms – farmers are nothing if not optimists – and I'm sure my tale of its success will add to its appeal for local gardeners. But I'll still prop up that blackboard announcing the presence of heirloom tomato seedlings to lure potential growers over before introducing them to the virtues of newer varieties – the heirlooms of tomorrow.

All of this is not to say heirlooms are no good. Heirlooms are incredible. They're plants that bring with them stories; genetics chosen by gardeners across the world, over centuries, for flavour, adaptations to the local soil or weather. Diversity is key. New varieties are made with old genetics — lose one and we can't make the other.

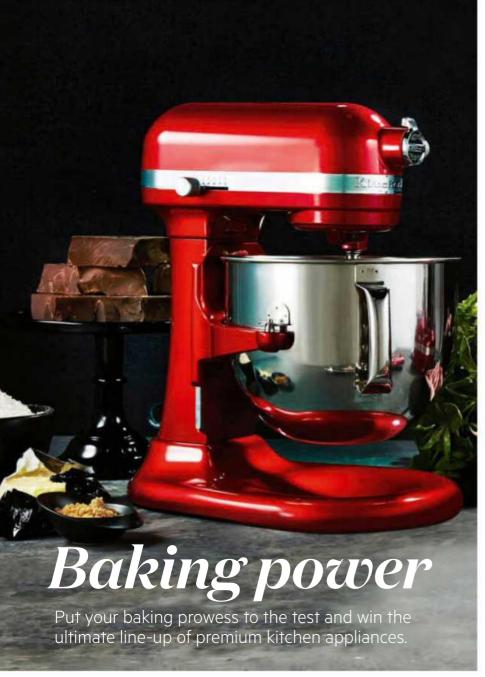
That 'Candystick Delicata', whose fragrance fills my house, is a modern variety. The original 100-year-old heirloom 'Delicata' is a delicious thing, no question. But Carol Deppe, a plant breeder in Oregon, has, through generations of plants, chosen and re-sown the tastiest, fattest and sweetest squash. And when I cut into the roasted flesh and marvel at the scent, the sweetness and the tiny seed cavity (more flesh for me – thanks Carol!) I'm grateful to those who have the imagination and discipline to keep bringing us more-delicious, more-reliable crops, and a never-ending supply of culinary adventures upon which to embark.

I'll save the seed of the finest-flavoured squash and of the most generous plants and perhaps our little farm will find its own heirloom among the seeds they produce.

The shining star among the few that made it to harvest was our new kid on the block. 99



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MELBOURNE REVIEW





Conjuringact

Expectation was running high before the doors opened on Lûmé, writes *Michael Harden*, and it delivers many highs, too, and its share of surprises.

The team at Lûmé hasn't been shy about oversharing in the lead-up to the opening of their restaurant. The "watch this space" messages were regular in the months (and months) before it opened: the slow-drip releases about their ambition to be the best in the world, the slo-mo, rock-scored YouTube clips featuring back lanes and Asian fishmongers, a series of preview dinners held offsite, a posturing anti-food photography stance and a couple of shots across the bows of the Melbourne dining scene.

When the likeable low-key personalities of owner-chefs Shaun Quade (formerly of the Royal Mail, Quay, Biota Dining and Urbane) and JP Fiechtner (who counts Hong Kong's Bo Innovation and Paris's Le Chateaubriand among his ports of call) were given some air, the tone came across more as food-geek enthusiasm than arrogant swagger. But by the time the doors to Lûmé eventually opened, all the talk made it feel like they were promising a miracle. What could possibly go wrong?

The good news is that Lûmé delivers on many of its many promises. More than delivers at times. And given that it's a new restaurant run by first-time owner-operators, the air is thick with potential.

It's exciting watching this young team giving it their all. They may not come up with the goods every time, but the misses are not due to a shortfall in skill, talent or ideas. It's more that those skills, talents and ideas can get a little out of control.

The hit-and-miss rollercoaster ride is most obvious in the three hour-plus dégustation menu. Though 15 or more courses ask much of the diner, there are some truly inspired moments along the way.

A gorgeous and beautifully realised dish comprising an oyster smoked over vine clippings, teamed with sea succulents, a ribbon of raw turnip and another "oyster" fashioned from celeriac, fish stock and squid ink is exciting, refreshing and appealingly textural.

An oddly appealing oat congee (steel-cut oats cooked in fish stock) has in its depths a squid-ink parfait of calamari entrails, brined and then marinated in yoghurt whey and vanilla, adding layers of flavour and complexity.

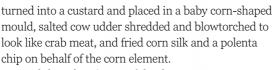
Then there's a quince and duck-liver dish where slices of quince, dehydrated and then cooked in butter and sage, arrive looking like the duck liver, and the liver comes in the form of a pool of parfait that could pass, at first glance, as quince. It's a solid dish; the sleight-of-hand visual trick doesn't overpower how well the flavours and textures play with each other.

Quade and Fiechtner obviously like trickery, the kind of culinary form-not-following-function gag that Heston Blumenthal is so fond of at The Fat Duck. The tricks come throughout the meal and among them are some real surprises. A smoked croissant is served with what looks like a small washed-rind cheese, which turns out to be a disc of rich creamy cauliflower cheese. A dish called "sea corn and dairy cow" sees crab>



Scan this page with the free **viewa** app to see a full menu from Lûmé or to contact the restaurant.





And then there's one of the desserts, a quite spectacular combination of flavours, colours and ingredients. A cacao pod made of chocolate is smashed open at the table to reveal a small crowd of multicoloured goodies: tobacco Wizz Fizz, currant jelly, an orange-flavoured crema Catalana, Granny Smith apples compressed in strawberry syrup and absinthe. They are there to reflect the flavour profile of the Papua New Guinean chocolate as it moves from its raw form to its current state.

It's pretty obvious that many ideas have been bouncing around in the heads of these two chefs, and that their agenda involves pushing a few boundaries and buttons. En masse and in lengthy dégustation form, though, it can feel as if the idea of light and shade has perhaps not been fully considered.

Sometimes there's a straining for effect that can take some of the fun out of eating, as in the "native bird" dish that you're encouraged to eat with your hands. It consists of cured, seasoned and hung emu meat that's not particularly attractive to look at and presents as a bit of a substandard and curiously bland jerky. It's an idea of a dish that would have benefited from a few return trips to the drawing board.

But Lûmé is driven by a philosophy of experimenting, mixing things up, questioning the way things are, particularly when it comes to the structure of fine dining.



It's certainly the road that sommelier Sally Humble has taken with the wine. The list's introduction says that "rather than a 'traditional' wine list organised purely by varieties, we have constructed the selection in an intentionally 'disorganised' manner, to keep you searching".

Whether you find this irritating or exciting is entirely up to you, but there's plenty of great stuff on the list from all over the world, though with a definite emphasis on Australian producers.

Organising the wines by countries and regions rather than varieties, and then spotlighting Australian terroir by featuring key local producers (there are multiple listing from the likes of Wendouree, Bannockburn, Cullen and Yarra Yering), is a clever way of shaking up the way you might normally negotiate a lengthy list such as this. It almost forces you out of your comfort zone, but within the safe parameters of Humble's keen palate.

Taking the matching option with the dégustation menu also generates some very interesting pairings. The combination of a 1999 Nakano BC "Chokyu", a deep-coloured sake with an almost bouillon-type nose, and a superb chicken dish that's been cooked sous-vide in chamomile and teamed with a creamy salt-cured egg yolk and a pennyroyal-flavoured oil is slightly strange, almost a little awkward but kind of wonderful, too.

It's a description that matches the room. Lûmé is housed in a former burlesque lounge that was once a couple of adjoining single-storey terrace houses, on a quiet stretch of Coventry Street. Money has been splashed on it, but the budget has obviously had its limits.

There are three rooms, the best at the front where the open kitchen and the marble and oak bar are located. The large back room lacks a little in

atmosphere, though it does have a retractable roof, which could make it prime position when the nights turn balmy.

The flatteringly lit front room has a timber and salmon-pink colour scheme, some half-mast curtains that serve as a room divider down one end and a rough plastered wall bearing some mock-caveman art. With banquettes, ceramic light fittings and some lovely cutlery from Portugal, the room feels like a crash of genres (the '80s and Scandinavia are certainly in the mix), some of which get on better than others.

Some of the seats, including those at the tables in the middle of the room in front of the open kitchen, can leave you feeling a little exposed. Those at the bar are where the room works the best.

Some might say the same about the bar menu. Quade and Fiechtner's more casual à la carte side channels Parisian bistronomy and shows the solid culinary skills that form the core of Lûmé's appeal. There's still plenty of imagination at work, but in a more relaxed and low-key fashion.



It's pretty obvious that many ideas have been bouncing around, and that their agenda involves *pushing a few boundaries* and buttons.

There are excellent oysters (served out of their shell) from Tasmania's Duck Bay and big-flavoured charcuterie that's sliced French-style rather than the more common (for Melbourne) thinner Italian shavings. There's an inspired dish of house-made ricotta teamed with smoked honey and shaved bottarga, and flank steak paired with a tumble of glistening mushrooms topped with shards of coconut. A lovely disc of roasted pumpkin is capped by pumpkin seeds and a bright yellow sauce made with vadouvan, the French masala-like spice mix. Superb chocolate-mousse "eggs", the rich mousse sealed in tempered chocolate, are cleverly teamed with a pale-yellow lemon marmalade.

Add fried duck nuggets and duck-fat brioche topped with shaved Manjimup truffles to the roster and you could imagine Lûmé's bar (or Front Room,

as it's currently known) slipping easily onto the regular agenda.

The dégustation menu at Lûmé is polarising. Fifteen or more courses are a big ask, both because of the time it takes to consume them and in the way the complex, sometimes challenging nature of every course calls attention to itself. You have to concentrate. Still, the \$140 price tag is marginally less frightening than those on some of the other multi-course menus around town and there's real commitment and inspiration at play here. Throw in a young and enthusiastic staff good at selling the wonders of each course (thankfully in a not-too-wordy fashion), a very interesting wine list and a quirky room and there are plenty of selling points.

Fiechtner and Quade may not yet have achieved all they promised, but there's nothing at Lûmé to suggest that they can't or won't. Truly, watch this space.

Lûmé

226 Coventry St, South Melbourne (03) 9690 0142 restaurantlume.com Licensed Cards AE MC V EFT Open Thu-Sat & Mon 6pm-9pm, Sun noon-3pm Prices 15-course dégustation \$140, bar menu \$5-\$33 Vegetarian On request Noise Present but not irritating Wheelchair access Yes Plus Young guns giving it a red-hot go Minus The red-hot go can sometimes lead to overreach

AND ALSO

On the boil

The team behind Eau-de-Vie has opened a gaslight-

gloomy, blues-lovin' bunker of a bar called Boilermaker House, where the main stock in trade is Boilermakers (a shot of whisky and a beer). With a reputed 700-plus whiskies and an impressive range of craft beer on tap and in bottles there's no shortage of pairings beyond the menu suggestions. Boilermaker House, 209-211 Lonsdale St, Melbourne, 0424 270 082



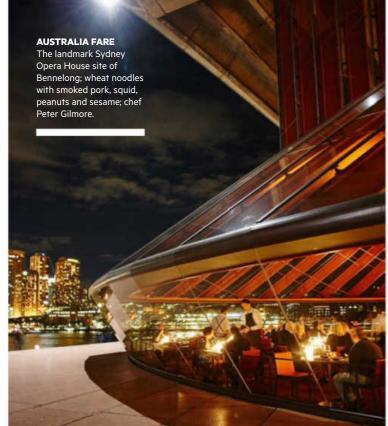
Dogs has its day

The fortunes of the beleaguered St Kilda landmark **Dogs Bar** are looking up now that the team from Sydney's Bishop Sessa (chef Paul Cooper and Erez Gordon) have taken it on. The room has been given a spruce-up and Cooper is doing his earthy Euro thing with the menu – making his own charcuterie, offering a changing list of house-made pasta and roasting whole ducks. The wine list is getting some attention, too, with an excellent selection by the glass. **Dogs Bar, 54 Acland St, St Kilda, (03) 9593 9535**

Talk of the Town

Those sorry to see Harry Lilai and his excellent Italian food depart Fitzroy's Town Hall Hotel will be cheered that Sean Donovan (Station Hotel, Footscray) has taken it on. Donovan has brought his trademark quality steak-and-oysters formula to the Town Hall, ably bolstered by a supporting cast that includes good parfait and blood sausage, excellent fish and chips and a smart, very reasonably priced wine list. Town Hall Hotel, 166 Johnston St, Fitzroy, (03) 9416 5055







Under full sail

Bennelong is back and better than ever with a definitively Australian menu, stellar crew and fit-out worthy of its architectural origins, writes **Pat Nourse**.

A friend rang me out of the blue the other day to ask me how I'd define Australian cuisine. "Bzzt!" I replied. "Shraffsh... breaking... up... shffsh... have to call you... shffsh," and then promptly switched off my phone. But, of course, I could have just simply sent him to Bennelong.

I'd recommend it regardless of your interest in defining what "modern Australian" means. It's a restaurant that has rocketed out of the gate in the face of very high expectations, and in most of the ways that count it has overshot the mark, bringing Sydney a new hybrid of casual and fine dining that's utterly delicious.

That same friend from the phone is fond of quoting a line from an essay the Melbourne writer Arnold Zable wrote for an exhibition at the city's Immigration Museum: "We are a nation of immigrants and indigenous people". And fittingly for a restaurant named Bennelong, the menu here, in its small way, makes a gesture towards the Australian-grown and the indigenous without discounting the vital contributions of the nation's newer arrivals. So you get grilled Lady Elliot Island bugs and red-claw yabbies, but the bugs come with fermented chilli and radishes, and the yabbies, like some bizarre (and bizarrely tasty) Devonshire tea, show up in the company of cultured cream, lemon jam and buckwheat pikelets tucked warm and jolly in a folded tea towel. You can, in short, have your shrimp and throw it on the barbie, too.

There was a bit of a tussle over the Sydney Opera House restaurant tender when Guillaume Brahimi decamped to Paddington after more than a decade's successful trade. Rumours about who would take over the smallest sail of this splendid landmark, one of the highest-profile restaurant properties in the country, ran rife. It was going to be a grand Bills. It was going to be a Noma pop-up. It was going to be filled with jelly, then unmoulded and left to wobble in the midday sun. Justin Hemmes kicked the tyres, as did just about every other deep-pocketed operator in town. Then it looked very like it was going to be a Stokehouse. Then it wasn't. And now it's Bennelong again, only like it's never been.

In defiance of sense, reason and the fact that they already have a rather well-regarded restaurant in sight of the House, the mob from Quay jumped into the breach. Peter Gilmore oversees both kitchens, but if running two of the biggest, most-drilled brigades in town is a strain, he is yet to show it. Plaudits, then, to Bennelong chef de cuisine Rob Cockerill and general manager Kylie Ball.

When Gilmore and John Fink, creative director of Quay's parent company, the Fink Group, talked about their plans for the food at Bennelong ahead of its opening, they spoke about dishes that had similar qualities to those that put Gilmore on the map at Quay, but made simpler and with less fuss. "Fewer processes but still the same quality ingredients," said Gilmore. The food at Bennelong is so good it may make you wonder what those additional processes and elements on the plate at Quay really add. The (relative) restraint of the new dishes is what makes them shine.>



Scan this page with the free *viewa* app to see a full menu from Bennelong or to contact the restaurant, and watch Peter Gilmore give a tour of the restaurant.

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SYDNEY REVIEW







John Dory is seldom better than when it's roasted on the bone, so that's what Gilmore does here. He's demurely lopped off the fish's head, but it's otherwise served whole, the meat beautifully set under a salty blanket of orach (aka fancy spinach), little drum-shaped pieces of turnip and kailan flowers. Somewhere there's some "umami butter", which I'm guessing involves seaweed, adding to the salty-savouriness of it all, but that's all there is on the plate. And that's all there needs to be. As part of the \$125 three-course prix fixe set-up, the main courses are served with a side of mixed potatoes (selected perhaps more for prettiness than an ideal mix of tastes and textures) and a head of lettuce that some poor bugger has had to take apart, dress like a salad, then put back together again.

The other main courses mostly follow similar protein-and-three-veg lines: lamb, broad beans, Jerusalem artichokes, kale; suckling pig, cippolini onions, "heritage" apples, black garlic; beef, carrot and barley. The pig is from Macleay Valley, the beef is wagyu rump cap, the Flinders Island lamb is accompanied by anchovy salt and nasturtiums, though, and the precision and presentation are pure Peter Gilmore. Holmbrae duck, roasted to an almost Chinese-barbecue texture, has savour for days thanks in part to the addition of black miso, and finds an elegant foil in fronds of hispi cabbage, some raw, some pickled, interleaved with swatches of toasty nori.

Bracketing these are entrées and desserts that are every bit as accomplished as the main courses, and perhaps more notable in their inventiveness.

The textural rhyme of wheat noodles – somewhere between udon and the lamian of northern China – and tender squid cut to the same shape makes eating them, with a dandan-like mixture of ground peanuts, sesame and smoked pork, a joy, while young garlic and translucent crisps of guanciale enliven a bowl of Tasmanian mussels served out of the shell with a salty broth and garnished sweetly with bean blossoms.

But fashioning a dessert that apes the shape of the Opera House is one of those ideas that probably should've been left at the brainstorming session. It's a pavlova dome of raspberry and rhubarb piped all over with droplets of Italian meringue, like some latter-day Dolly Varden cake, adorned with crisp curves of meringue: Jørn Utzon meets Ken Done. And definitely more Done than Dane in the flavour stakes.

Contrast that with "crème caramel vs mille-feuille". It's a battle between the two desserts rendered in slivers of buttery pastry, artfully torn bits of the set custard, and bitter caramel in dollops and crisp wafers. To call it a mash-up is to do a disservice to both the art with which it has been plated to look so artless, and to a welcome flash of wit and levity in its conception. It reads almost like Gilmore critiquing the geometric fussiness of his early Quay desserts, and eats like a dream. (Who won? I ask a waiter, the mille-feuille or the crème caramel? "I think it's a draw, sir," he replies. I demand a rematch.) It's the dessert of the year.

The offer of three courses instead of a tasting menu feels really good. It's a decent amount of food, and your night isn't clagged up with unnecessary filler-like amuse-bouches and (groan) pre-desserts. Better bread than the stuff they're baking themselves at the moment, though, is a must. Otherwise, if you want the bells and whistles, the petits fours and the nine courses, the staff will happily recommend just the place, over the way at the Overseas Passenger Terminal.

For an even more unstitched affair, there's the Cured & Cultured menu. It's offered at the bar on the landing, and also in The Circle, the area off the bar on the upper level that always seemed like dead space. Visiting the bar on a cold night, you may wonder at the wisdom of offering almost nothing hot and little that's substantial. If you want to nip in for a couple of crab sandwiches and a glass of Champagne to tide you over for a three-hour performance of *Don Carlos*, you'll be struggling to make a meal. If you're on one of those diets where you have>

CENTRE STAGE

Top right: roasted John Dory with orach, turnips, kailan and umami butter. Above: Larrakitj memorial poles by Arnhem Land artists. to spend loads of money, eat protein, flowers and sprinkles, this is the carte for you.

There's no faulting the deliciousness of smoked wagyu tartare spiced with Korean-style chilli paste, cultured rye, wheat, puffed green rice, seaweed and mushrooms topped with a raw yolk. Savoury, richly textured, clever. Or ribbons of culatello ham sliced from a Byron Bay pig with wafers of barley toast (the closest you'll get to bread here), truffle butter and crunchy little radishes. But do they conspire to add up to a meal? The menu here seems designed with an eye to snacking; try to eat (let alone dine) and as the dishes stack up you'll quickly find yourself nudging the \$125 you'd pay in the restaurant.

Wine is a more streamlined affair than at Quay, and not so gougingly expensive. The list tilts Australian, flirts with a bit of "emerging regions", and mostly plays to the crowd. You want Burgundy, there's Montrachet. You feel like something with a bit of edge? There's the chardonnay-sémillon-gewürztraminer blend that Owen Latta makes near Ballarat that's seen some skin contact. You want a glass for \$12, there's riesling from Clare and mataro from the Barossa.

There are some off notes in this otherwise seductive production. There's less preciousness on the menu than at Quay, but describing the wheat noodles as "single-origin" is rather over-egging the pudding. Does it make any difference to the finished product? Seasoning has also been consistently on the high side when I've been in. For my sins I eat restaurant food most days of the week, so it hasn't been a deal-breaker for me, but if you're salt-sensitive, watch out. Maybe more thought needs to be given to the connection between the salty plants and ferments that appear on many of the plates and overall seasoning of the dishes.

Service, as at Quay, still feels studied rather than something the floor staff command on any innate level. The cooks behind the counter at the raw bar seem unhurried, happy to have a good chat with each other rather than pretend to look busy or do anything so outré as plate my dinner promptly. (And confidential to Jørn Utzon: there's something about the ratio of the tread to





the rise on your stairs that has always made them slightly sickening to climb. Can we blame Bob Askin?)

But for every slip there's a surprise grace note. When dishes come with one of those broths that apparently need to be added at the table, the vessel is set on the table for the diner to dispense rather than tediously flourished by a waiter. And even within the constraints of the heritage landmark status of the building, the design by Tonkin Zulaikha Greer shines in details large (the radiance of the spectacular Tom Dixon "Melt" copper lights) and small (the glimmering drawers recessed into a wall which hold the coats).

And then there's the inescapable grandeur of the Opera House itself, the thrill of those views. Stripping away the tablecloths and doubling the number of tables has been the real masterstroke here, bringing the place the buzz it has always needed.

Yabbies and roast lamb, pavlova and lamingtons, whiting and pipis and bugs - oh my! Is this Australian cuisine? It's certainly a pretty tasty place to start looking. More usefully, perhaps, it's a mighty pleasant addition to our city. If you'll allow me to draw a long bow, you might find some parallels here between this incarnation of Bennelong and Arnold Zable's Australia, which he calls a new world with an ancient past: "A grand symphony with many melodies."

Bennelong

Sydney Opera House, Bennelong Point, Sydney, (02) 9240 8000, bennelong.com.au Licensed Cards AE, MC, V, EFT Open Lunch Fri-Sun noon-2pm; pre-theatre daily from 5.30pm & 6pm; dinner daily 6.30pm-10pm Prices Three courses \$125; Cured & Cultured share plates \$26-\$30; desserts \$28 Vegetarian One entrée, one main course, two bar plates Noise Welcome buzz Wheelchair access Yes (restaurant only) Minus Not quite natural hospitality Plus But a rousing new welcome to one of the world's great buildings just the same

Hit single

With so much good coffee going on all of a sudden, it's bound

to be only moments before someone coins some ghastly NoHo-like nickname for the Wynyard-to-QVB city strip. (QueenYard? The WVB?). Mecca, Gumption and The Cross, and now a CBD branch of Single Origin. It's tiny, but packs a punch with bacon-and-egg rolls with red-eye mayo and a range of sandwiches at lunch. Single Origin, 89 York St. Sydney, (02) 9279 2677



Point break

Anyone who gives even half a damn about drinking good wine in Sydney will follow Love, Tilly Devine founder Matt Swieboda anywhere he goes. In 2015 that means Potts Point, where he's branched out with Waterman's Lobster Co. The food is good - casual, big-flavour seafood fun - but perhaps the real pleasure is to be able to savour his wine selection in marginally more comfortable surrounds. Burgundy ahoy! Waterman's Lobster Co, shop 5, 29 Orwell St, Potts Point, (02) 9380 2558 Redfern, (02) 8065 4625

You name it

"Our owner had a dream when he was a boy that he'd open a place called Oratnek," a staffer tells us. "It's his name spelled backwards." Fastforward a decade or two, and Kentaro Takayama has opened Oratnek in Redfern on the site once occupied by The Fern. Here he mingles Sydney café tropes with Japanese influences: there's daikon and a roasted sesame dressing in the salad, and Japanese fried chicken in the sandwiches. Good coffee, too. Oratnek, 4 Pitt St,

French hot spot

The secret to my appetising entrée is prime produce, a touch of savoir faire and my trusty Tefal® non-stick pan.

Potato blini with smoked salmon and crème fraîche

Prep 15 mins, cook 1 hr Makes 12

600 gm Desiree potatoes, scrubbed

- 30 gm plain flour
- 3 eggs
- 2 egg yolks
- 80 gm crème fraîche, plus extra to serve
- 2 tbsp finely chopped chives, plus extra to serve
- 250 gm smoked salmon
- 1 Preheat oven to 180°C. Place potatoes in oven and bake until tender when pierced with a sharp knife (45-60 minutes).
- **2** Halve potatoes, spoon fluffy insides from skins and pass through a ricer or drum sieve into a bowl.
- 3 Mix in flour, then add eggs, yolks and crème fraîche and combine well. Add chives and season with salt and freshly ground black pepper. Allow mixture to rest for 1½ hours.
- 4 Place an 26cm Tefal frying pan on medium heat, add a little oil, then drop in tablespoonfuls of batter to form 5cm rounds and cook, flipping once, until golden on both sides.
- **5** To serve, top blini with smoked salmon, crème fraîche and chives.

Happy cooking and

Bon Appélil!



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cook like an Italian

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auto espresso 15045 now \$1749, save \$250 (glass not included)



DELONGHI Magnifica coffee machine ECAM23210W now **\$969**, save \$130 (alass not included)

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On the money

Meet Marc Blazer, talent collector, dream enabler and the man behind the Noma brand. He talks to **Jeni Porter**.

As chairman of Copenhagen's Noma, Marc Blazer can dine anywhere and receive VIP treatment. It says a lot about Blazer's low-key style that on his second night ever in Sydney he went anonymously to Paddington wine bar 10 William St, sat up at the bar, and raved about its snow pea sprouts with smoked oil, chilli and garlic

It was early February and Noma was nearing the end of a five-week stint at Tokyo's Mandarin Oriental. Blazer and chef and co-owner René Redzepi were already working on the next residency, so he made his first trip to Australia, visiting Sydney, Margaret River and Perth. Six months and many false starts later Redzepi announced he would relocate Noma to a new space in Sydney's Barangaroo precinct for 10 weeks and apply his acclaimed inventiveness to Australia's bountiful native produce.

Speaking in Copenhagen, Blazer, a Dutch-American who calls himself a "recovering banker", almost winces when he says that the costs of the exercise are so high Noma will most likely make no money from it.

"I'm nervous about this," he says." You don't bring 100 people halfway around the world with the aim of making money."

But taking Noma to Australia will extend the reach of one of the world's most highly rated restaurants, and function as a case study for an ambitious business model and, most importantly, he says, "make René and the team happy".

Blazer bought a controlling stake in Noma for an undisclosed amount in June 2013. He'd set up the New York-based Overture Investment Partners specifically to invest in talent-driven hospitality businesses and, as he says in banker speak, "build the brand equity". Noma and its charismatic founding chef were a perfect fit. The 12-year-old restaurant makes a slim profit margin, but Blazer believes there's huge potential to make money off the brand.

"Investing in restaurants is nobody's idea of a good idea, but it's what you can do around it," he says, likening it to the way luxury fashion houses use haute couture to set their identity. He has no desire to meddle in the way Noma is run; rather, "I view my job as giving life to René's dreams," he says. He also wants to make Redzepi rich. (Notwithstanding Noma's success, Redzepi has only recently bought his own home.)

Blazer's motives are hardly altruistic, but he's impassioned when he talks about how much celebrated chefs do for so little personal gain. "So much of the value that these guys generate is given away. Given away!" he says, citing books, events, and television shows that trade on chefs' fame. "They have not yet grasped the power of their brands."

Blazer's laid-back style belies his determination to be a disruptive force in the culinary world, compelling the "commercial guys on the good side of the deal" to share the booty. Starting with Redzepi, he wants to create a portfolio of talent — a kind of premier league of chefs — with Overture remaining behind the scenes, "being the dream enablers and focusing on making our talent very, very wealthy". Ergo, Blazer and his Overture investors.

Redzepi has never been motivated by making money, but Blazer's backing has given him more power to dictate his destiny by delivering him joint control of Noma. It also settled a deep rift with the other founding shareholder, Danish food entrepreneur Claus Meyer. In Blazer, Redzepi says, he has a true partner, "Somebody who actually wakes up in the morning and goes to work for the betterment of our restaurant without other vested interests, which is the first time I've had that in a partner and that's really helpful in my daily work."

Blazer had never been to Noma until he considered investing in it and fends off questions about his favourite dish. "I have a very unromantic view of this asset class," he says, adding, "I'm not a foodie per se." Nevertheless, hanging around Redzepi has rubbed off on him — he's even started posting food shots on Instagram.

After Australia, Redzepi will return his focus to Copenhagen where he has long dreamed of opening an unpretentious restaurant serving good food to a lot of people. "I don't have to paint the future for him; I just have to help him get there," says Blazer. Two years after investing in Noma he feels as though "we're just getting into gear for the next decade of Noma".

have to paint the future for him; I just have to help him get there.
We're just getting into gear for the next decade of Noma.

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Joining the award-winning team at Jonah's Restaurant are executive chef Logan Campbell and head sommelier Luke Collard. New Zealand-born Campbell brings a wealth of experience, having been the executive chef at the acclaimed Lucio's in Sydney's Paddington for 12 years.

Now running the show at Jonah's Restaurant, he's delivering a new contemporary Australian menu with a tight focus on local seafood given an Italian spin, which includes some of his signature pasta dishes. His dégustation menu is not to be missed.

Meanwhile, head sommelier Luke Collard, formerly of Ormeggio, oversees an exceptional wine list of more than 1500 Australian and international wines, with more than 6000 cellared bottles.

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Out of service

Not everyone is cut out to wait tables with grace and patience, writes *Larissa Dubecki* – and she should know.

Most diners remember the service over the food. That's the terrifying information just to hand from the land of We Poll Anything – not only for the chefs who believe they are the sun around which the restaurant world revolves, but for the restaurateurs nervously surveying the ranks of the people they call waiters.

Some of those apron wearers will be true professionals, able to turn a table over with the polished efficiency of the Ferrari pit crew; intuitive enough to divine at 20 paces if someone prefers a vermentino over a verdicchio. Sprinkled among them, however, will be the waiter undead – a motley bunch of miscreants, thieves, liars, psychopaths, druggies, borderline personality disorders, alcoholic uni students and Danish backpackers, all doing the job as a means to an end. For anyone with the unenviable task of hiring waiters, sifting through the human flotsam can be a full-time job in itself. A long, slogging, thankless, shitful task of trying to divine the human being lurking behind the eager face at the interview. It's Murphy's Law. Get a good one and they'll soon be off to that ashram in India for a year-long spiritual retreat. Get a complete nuffy and they'll be hanging around like a fart in a car. Crucial stuff, though. Restaurants don't just sell food, they sell hospitality, and whomsoever slips through the net will become its appointed representative on the floor.

Confession time: *Prick with a Fork*, a memoir of my decade as a waiter before becoming a restaurant critic, is not full of triumphant stories about winning over difficult diners, the sort who complain the crusty bread hurts their mouths and that the bouillabaisse is too

fishy. I was the Melbourne restaurant world's answer to Manuel from *Fawlty Towers*, toiling alongside other dreadful waiters in the kind of establishments where diners were known to request cravats of water.

There was my housemate Belinda, for instance, who took the job title literally and mounted a spirited argument to her first boss that she had signed up only to take orders and carry food. Cleaning the bar when things were quiet? Restocking the fridge? No, no, no. If you would kindly read the job description... Fired from that one. At her next gig she grew tired one night of reciting the specials to each separate table, and announced to the room, "Listen up, everyone. I'm only going to do this once..." Fired from that one, too.

Or Marcello, the world's laziest Italian, who upsold garlic bread by intimating it was on the house, and was overheard telling customers they couldn't sit in his section because it had just been sprayed for cockroaches. And Andrea, who didn't even make it through a single night thanks to a spot of docket "mis-scribing" that was only picked up after the kitchen had freshly shucked 12 dozen oysters instead of 12.

Even now, after more than a decade writing about restaurants for a living, every time I finish a meal where service went smoothly and no one was maimed I pause to murmur a prayer of thanks. Waiting tables is a physical, mental and emotional slog, requiring the patience of Gandhi and the toughness of Arnold Schwarzenegger in Terminator. But it's given me a brilliant idea in the pursuit of world peace: anyone seeking a position of importance, from local councillor to secretary-general of the UN, should be able to prove they've waited tables at some time. Being a waiter teaches resilience. It teaches grace under pressure. It teaches you how to mock your enemies mercilessly behind their backs while presenting a smiling face. So I'll have a half-decaf skinny soy chai latte, thanks Mr Ban Ki-moon. And make it hot, but not too hot. Prick with a Fork (\$29.99, pbk) by Larissa Dubecki is published by Allen & Unwin on 26 August.

of world peace, anyone seeking a position of importance should be able to prove they've waited tables at some time.



A model tequila

Tequila is the new black. At least it is for Jennifer Hawkins, who has acquired a taste for Mexico's national tipple – and now her own label, writes **George Epaminondas**.

The scorching sun hovers directly above a bountiful field of agave in Central Mexico. A dozen *jimadors*, the farmers who harvest the green-blue succulents, slice off long, spiky stalks to reveal sugar-rich hearts – it's the *piña*, or pineapple, that's distilled to make tequila. Making their way across this rugged terrain, cautiously stepping over a bridge of broken stalks, are Jennifer Hawkins and Jake Wall. Hawkins hastily trades her gold Louis Vuitton wedges for a pair of Havaianas. This is a research mission, after all, not a fashion shoot.

"It's hard yakka out here," Hawkins says, as the *jimadors* thwack the agave with their flat-bladed *coas*. The Sierra Madre Occidental rears up behind her, and the soft thrum of crickets can be heard. "This has been an adventure," she adds.

When Hawkins — model, brand ambassador, television presenter and entrepreneur — likes to unwind, it's with a tequila-infused cocktail. She was introduced to the spirit by her husband, Wall, who's long been a tippler. The pair serve tequila when entertaining at home, order it while holidaying in far-flung locations, and enjoyed it at their Bali wedding two years ago. Indeed, they are so enamoured of Mexico's national drink that they are launching their own brand, Sesión, in Australia this October.

The state of Jalisco has more than 150 registered distillers, but Hawkins and Wall were intent on working with one in particular, Tierra de Agaves. "We didn't want to put our names on something second rate – we wanted the best we could get," says Hawkins.

Not all tequilas are created equal. "Mixtos" are made with at least 51 per cent agave and fortified with sugar. Typically, it's these that lead to a dreaded hangover. Sesión is made from 100 per cent blue agave, and it's a small-batch artisanal spirit, which, according to Hawkins, makes it smoother. Tierra de Agaves is known for adhering to a strict farm-to-bottle ethos. The famed distillery was established by Francisco Beckmann, whose family founded bestselling brand Jose Cuervo. Hawkins and Wall also partnered with Tim Freeburn and Shane McKillen, who were once involved in 42 Below vodka.

"Tim and Shane introduced us to the Beckmanns, and we immediately liked the fact that our tequila would come from the one estate and the one distillery," says Wall as we ride in the back of a pick-up truck, navigating our way along bumpy sun-toasted roads

back to the distiller's headquarters. "Some companies source their agave from various places, but we get the same premium product every time," he adds.

At the Tierra de Agaves base, we follow the various stages of tequila production — cooking, pressing, fermenting, distilling, ageing and bottling — like a group of earnest chemistry students, with master agave grower José Fernández as our guide. "It's good to have this lesson," says Hawkins.

First, we visit the cooking room, where the *piñas* are steamed and then cooled. It takes roughly eight years for the fruit to be ripe enough to be harvested. Puffs of fragrant steam emanate from enormous stainless-steel vats. "The scent is so sweet," says Hawkins, who likens the aroma to a honey-nut cereal. Fernández offers us some of the cooked fruit to taste, which is delicious. We also try an unprocessed tequila, which leaves a burning sensation in the mouth. It has some way to go before being drinkable. "I'm a lightweight, so that was a little intense," says Hawkins. Most tequilas, including Sesión, are bottled at around 40 per cent alcohol.

With Sesión, the couple hopes to introduce drinkers to the nuances of tequila. Many of us associate the spirit with shots with salt and lime. But there's another side to tequila that's more cultured, refined and flavourful. "It's not just a slam, bam, sort of>

FIELD OF ENDEAVOUR

Left: the Sierra Madre
Occidental is backdrop to
the agave field where
Jennifer Hawkins and
Jake Wall visit the harvest.
Below: blue agave piñas
destined for the distillery.



DRINKS

drink," says Wall, seated in a tasting room. Here, we try a slew of different styles, starting with blanco, an unaged tequila that's ideal for mixing. Amber-hued reposado, which is rested in Bourbon barrels for six months, is excellent straight up or mixed. And bronze-tinted añejo, aged for 12 to 18 months, deserves to be savoured. This añejo has an arresting, smoky flavour and bright floral undertones.

"If you can identify traces of wood, vanilla and cooked agave, it's a good tequila," says expert taster Guillermo Murillo. Try a lot of tequilas, connoisseurs advise, and you'll even detect different terroirs.

Sesión will début with three varieties: a clear, young Blanco; barrel-aged Reposado; and Mocha, a concoction laced with coffee and chocolate.

"Mocha is super-feminine," says Hawkins, "and lovely if you have a sweet tooth." The US market, more advanced in the tequila stakes than ours, will also have an añejo.

Over the years, Hawkins has parlayed her looks and fame into an impressively eclectic career. The former Miss Universe has been a brand ambassador for Myer since 2007, launched a swimwear line and bronzing collection, and formed a property development company with her partner. How does alcohol fit into her burgeoning lifestyle brand?

"It's a passion project for us, and it happened so organically. There's definitely a gap in the market for an Australian tequila," says Hawkins. "And since Sesión is produced with 100 per cent blue agave, you can say it's natural." Everything in moderation, they admit, but there may even be health benefits to imbibing tequila. It's purported to bolster the appetite, aid in digestion and possibly even assist in reducing cholesterol.

"Tequila contains simple sugars which break down easily in your body, and it has a low glycemic index," says Wall. "When I discovered that, I said 'yes'!" adds Hawkins.

In the sherbet-coloured town of Tequila, the spiritual home, we whiz by street vendors selling fresh fruit, coconut drinks and vibrant ceramic gourds, and stop at a roadside bar that specialises in tequila cocktails called Cantaritos. Brass-heavy traditional Mexican banda music booms from a set of speakers, and behind a long counter loaded with ingredients two fresh-faced young men prepare a round of potent drinks. Cantaritos are made from orange juice, grapefruit juice, grapefruit soda, lime juice and salt with two generous shots of tequila. They're served in an enormous clay pot, which you can take with you. "Oh dear, I might be on the ground soon," warns Hawkins, gamely sipping at hers.

Lunch is at a restaurant in the grand Hotel Solar de las Animas, which was inspired by a Creole colonial house. True to form, Hawkins has a frozen Margarita with her grilled chicken. Wall has the same drink on the rocks to accompany his steak. I order the prawns cooked with tequila essence, happy to note the spirit is

finding its ways into cuisine, too. "You can also douse it on steak," says Wall.

Contemplating her newfound status as a tequila advocate, Hawkins flashes a mischievous smile. "We find that if we have tequila, the night takes unexpected turns – it's more spontaneous and fun. It kind of elevates you."

Sesión tequila will be available from October at Qantas epiQure, First Choice, and Vintage Cellars for around \$90 a bottle; sesiontequila.com

HEAVY SESIÓN

Clockwise from below: Sesión Blanco; Bourbon barrels used for ageing; blue agave *piñas*, harvested at around eight years old; Wall and Hawkins with potent Cantaritos.









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Short and sweet

Small is the order of the day in restaurants, with tight wine lists showcasing boutique drops, writes *Max Allen*.

One of the most exciting trends in Australian restaurants is the proliferation of very short, very good wine lists. It's particularly prevalent among newcomers to this year's *GT* restaurant guide: many of the hottest places offer only a handful of wines – maybe 20 or fewer, including sparkling and sweet – but all are exquisitely well chosen, tempting, delicious and oh-so-right for the ethos of the establishment.

At Bang in Sydney's Surry Hills, for example, spicy Bangladeshi street food can be accompanied by just a dozen or so wines, all Portuguese (a quirky nod to the centuries-old links between the two countries). At Nel Restaurant near Central, the list features only around 30 wines – 10 of which are offered as the wine matches for the dinner dégustation. And at Chaco Bar in Darlinghurst, there are 15 sakes on offer, and just 12 wines, including three from Japan – and I want to drink all of them.

I feel the same way about the dozen wines at Milk & Honey in Mullumbimby; the 20 wines at Three Blue Ducks in Byron Bay, available by the glass or carafe; and the 20 or so wines (each listed with a detailed, tantalising description) at Fleet in Brunswick Heads.

In Melbourne, the 40 wines and 20 sakes on offer across all styles at Minamishima are a perfect reflection of the focused, precise, minimalist approach to the

food; at Franklin in Hobart the list of 40 wines reads like a rollcall of the hipper end of the natural-wine world; and at Africola in Adelaide, the two-dozen bottle selection — classics from Stellenbosch rubbing shoulders with cult wines from the Barossa — is wonderfully in keeping with chef Duncan Welgemoed's homage to both his homeland in South Africa and his adopted home in South Australia.

The wine program at Africola is put together by Welgemoed, sommelier Matt McNamara and bar manager Andrew Cameron.

"It's a snapshot of Duncan's family history," says Cameron. "So we're supporting the wines made by the local producers that he's become friends with, as well as introducing people to both newer South African wines from Swartland and old-school wines such as Meerlust. Which is fun. We get expat South Africans who see those wines on our one-page list and say 'How did you get that? I haven't seen that for 20 years'."

Cameron explains that while there may only be around 20 wines on the list, the selection changes regularly, meaning more producers get a chance to sell small quantities of wine – and customers and staff are constantly finding something new to get excited about.

"You don't need a big list," he says. "I don't think you need two sauvignon blancs, for example; just put one really good one on and then, when that runs out, put something similar but different on so that people can try something new. It's about the art of conversation: doing something different every day so that when regulars come in there's always something new to talk about."

For Astrid McCormack at the tiny Fleet, having a list of 20 or so wines is partly driven by practicality.

"We just don't have much storage space," she says. "And because of the temperatures here and the kinds of wines we're selling (mostly in the natural spectrum, with very low or no preservatives), I'm very aware of the need to handle them properly, so I buy small quantities and turn them over very quickly. Also, a lot of the producers I deal with only make tiny amounts of some wines, so they might only be able to sell me a case of this and a case of that."

As a result, says McCormack, the list at Fleet changes perhaps two or three times a week. As she is mostly sourcing direct from the producers — and composing an evocative note for every new wine as it appears — it's a lot of work for such a short document.

"Some days I think, why am I doing this?" she says.
"But I've been amazed how much diners have engaged with the wines. And I think the effort has paid off: it's helped people connect with the wines and really understand the stories behind them."

For Andrew Cameron at Africola, connection is what a small, flexible list is all about.

"I moved here from Brisbane so that I could have these exciting winemakers on my doorstep," he says. "And that's why people go out to eat and drink in restaurants – for those connections, for the stories."

amazed how much diners have engaged with the wines. The effort has paid off: it's helped people understand the stories behind them.

EDEN HALL

NEW WHITE 2015 Eden Hall Grüner Veltliner, Eden Valley, SA, \$35

The first grüner veltliner from the Eden Valley. and it's a cracker - not surprising, really: the region is renowned for aromatic whites. Crisp, riesling-like perfume, followed by distinctive green honeydew melon-rind texture on the tongue. edenhall.com.au



ANCIENT FLAVOURS 2013 Zorah Karasì. Armenia, \$62

Here's one for your wine-geek friends: made from the ancient Armenian indigenous red grape areni noir, grown near a 13th-century monastery, it tastes of tangy wild hedgerow berries and tangled undergrowth. cellarhand.com.au

HIGH-COUNTRY RED 2012 Fighting Gully Road Aglianico, Beechworth, Vic, \$40 Grown in a vineyard high on

RUCKUS

2013 Ruckus Estate Mérité

Merlot, Wrattonbully,

From a vineyard planted

with new merlot clones

and made by Sue Bell of

this is an impressively

Bellwether in Coonawarra,

elegant, perfumed wine -

little red berries, aniseed

and cinnamon - that should

age gracefully in the cellar.

ruckusestate.com

SA, \$50

the edge of the Beechworth escarpment, this is a fabulous example of the aglianico grape - cultivated largely in southern Italy: plush purple hue, some dried herb and tight berry flavour, and fine. long, grippy tannin. fightinggully.com



FUN FIZZ 2013 Vigna Bottin Versecco, McLaren Vale, SA, \$35

If you like prosecco, track down a bottle of this. It's not made with the prosecco grape - it's made with vermentino - but it's more authentically prosecco in style than most Aussie proseccos that are made from prosecco. Confused? Just try it.



Alfredo Maestro sources grapes from

tiny old vineyards and uses minimal intervention to produce small batches of vibrant wines. This high-altitude garnacha is stunning: funky spice and black fruit, tightly wound, intense grip. bibendum.com.au



WAKE-UP CALL

2013 Patrick Piuze Terroir de Chichée, Chablis, France, \$42 Sometimes I get a hankering for Chablis: a thirst for pure, unadulterated chardonnay deliciousness, a white wine to make me feel refreshed and alive. This fits the bill nicely: vibrant, lemony, intense and pristine. Bring on the oysters.

domainewineshippers.com.au



OLD FAVOURITE 2014 Wirra Wirra Original Blend Grenache Shiraz,

McLaren Vale, SA, \$25 While hipster somms and indie bottle-os go ga-ga for new wave, smashable, spicy South Oz grenache blends, it's nice to be reminded that some wineries have been producing this style, on and off, for decades. wirrawirra.com



St-Agnes Grand Reserve 40-Year-Old XO Brandy, 700ml, \$800

A bold statement of confidence in the quality and heritage of Australian brandy, this luxuriously packaged spirit, with its 24-carat gold trim, is exquisite: powerful lingering flavours of spiced candied orange and sweet smoky wood. stagnesdistillery.com.au









WINE INSIDER: MATT SWIEBODA, WATERMAN'S LOBSTER CO

What's on pour? Architects of Wine from the Adelaide Hills. It's unashamedly oaky, buttery, powerful and my customers adore it. Best match lately? Our Connecticut-style lobster roll with the latest vintage of the Picardy Chardonnay. Again, an unashamedly rich chardonnay. Top spring drop? Pale, dry, refreshing rosé. Winemakers to watch? Domaine Christophe from Chablis. Frédéric Cossard, a producer in Burgundy; a bunch of his wines are very minimal intervention, but each really speaks of its terroir. *Favourite watering* holes? 10 William St and 121BC. When you're not drinking wine? Wet gin Martinis and a Royal Bermuda Yacht Club. Waterman's Lobster Co, 5/29 Orwell St, Potts Point, NSW, (02) 9380 2558 MAYA KERTHYASA



Pulling up stumps

AA Gill is giving up the googlies, the gouging, the spinners, the sticky wickets, and the silly mid-ons. Cricket is dismissed. Howzat?

As I write this, England has just won the first test match and, by the time you read it, they'll have probably lost the Ashes. So this seems a good moment to look at sport, in particular, cricket. Of all the things I've given up in my life – alcohol, heroin, fags, other people's wives and girlfriends – by far and away the easiest, but strangely most regretted, has been cricket. One summer I just turned on the telly and thought: "No, no more cricket, I'm done with it. I'm pulling stumps. Just say no." And when blokes at work would ask whether I thought the pitch at Headingley would take spin on the third day, I'd say:

"I've given up cricket."

"What, all cricket?"

"Yup."

"Not even one-day games?"

"Not a day at any time. I'm not doing one." "Surely Twenty20? You're going to do a little Twenty20." (The cricket version of vaping.)

"Not even Twenty20."

It may be harmless. No one ever got divorced over Twenty20 games, but it's all or nothing. You can't just do a little cricket. I've given up, I'm not a cricket-watcher any more.

"But what about your sons?" that man that stands at the end of every bar in every pub in the world asked, with a choke in his voice. "If you haven't got cricket, how are you going to talk to your son? Where are you going to take those long, blank silences that are the intimate communication of international maleness?"

"I'm just going to do other stuff with them. I was thinking probably eating in restaurants or going to galleries and museums. Possibly the theatre."

"Jesus," my bar interlocutor said, gravid with disgust. "That's just plain wrong. That's inhuman. Worse, it's unmanly."

Well, yes, unmanly was the look I was aiming for. I needed to break the circle – the terrible father-son contamination of cricket. Very few men come to cricket from choice. You

don't motor past a village green one day and think *that looks interesting* because it doesn't. Nothing about cricket looks interesting. It is the least-physical physical sport.

You catch cricket from someone else. Usually your father. It is the thing you do with him because he really wants to do it with you. Everything else in your young life he's done under sufferance: read you childish stories, played childish board games, pushed you on swings. All of that he's been happy to do, proud to do, but taking you to watch cricket was the first thing he really looked forward to doing with you — wanted to do as your father.

Dads, when they think of sons, when they look into cots, they imagine one day taking a cooler and watching the Ashes with this little fella and explaining the difference between a googly and a leg break, and going around the pitch, testing him on fielding positions. Teaching a lad to do ball-by-ball scoring, to sit on a damp, chilly Wednesday in an empty ground and watch the excruciating excitement of an English team batting for a desperate draw.

There is a truth about cricket that was pointed out to me by an august editor of *Wisden*, the cricketing almanac that makes *The Book of Common Prayer* read like rib-tickling farce. He said, "We don't watch the games we look at," and here he paused for effect. "We watch the games our fathers looked at. Their childhood games, and our fathers watched our grandfathers' childhood games, and they in turn saw WG Grace by proxy." And as he said it, I knew it was the truth.

I went to cricket with my dad. He had been a lifelong supporter of Kent and he would talk to me about watching Godfrey Evans and Denis Compton, and having seen Bradman and Woolley. And when I think back about cricket, I see it in black and white with Brylcreemed men with turn-ups in flannel trousers. Cricket became a family mythology. The '32 team of Jardine and Larwood, with Les Ames, one of the long, illustrious line of keepers from Kent, the Nawab of Pataudi. I'd never seen any of them.





Indeed, my father had never seen any of them. The tour was on the other side of the world. But he told me, and they became real, flickering shadows in my cricketing memory. And it's got to stop.

I can't inflict Geoffrey Boycott and Bill Edrich and the great unstoppable West Indian team of Garry Sobers on my little boy. I have to break this maudlin, repetitive metaphor for real family engagement and interest and fun, or love.

The cricket thing handed from father to son is the great awkward dull and repetitive allegory for our inability to communicate openly, honestly, directly, and emotionally.

But I can't say that I don't miss cricket. It's still the receptacle of my father's gentle feelings. And when I see a pair of batsmen walk onto to pitch at the start of a day's play, I can feel a big hand around my small hand and the noise of sonorous applause, and the *plock* of ball on bat is the sound of my dad talking. It is appropriate that both our countries play for the Ashes, a tiny doll's house urn of dust, a parable of something else. But it stops with me.

All sport is a metaphor, a simile for something else — partisan, nationalism, regionalism, a bottomless bucket of thwarted ambitions and frustrations. We watch football on terraces across Europe and Latin America, and all that energy, all those voices raised in passion, and always thinking about what we can't say, what we really mean.

I like countries and places that have sports that no one else plays. The Bhutanese have archery. I know other people shoot bows and arrows, but they don't do it in their dressing gowns. And they don't do it from one end of a pitch to the other where the opposition stands beside their target goal, sledging. It's Bhutan's thing. They shoot arrows at each other and no one ever gets hit. They laugh and they shout and they drink a bit and they talk. And they take it as seriously as Buddhists take anything. No one makes millions or goes on international tours, or advertises watches or hair transplants.

And there's something nice about taking your kid out to learn how to shoot arrows – better than knowing the umpire's signal for a leg bye.

There is a poem my father taught me by Francis Thompson. It is the best poem about cricket. It's one of the best poems about sport because, really, it's about our fathers. The last stanza goes:

For the field is full of shades as I near the shadowy coast,

And a ghostly batsman plays to the bowling of a ghost,

And I look through my tears on a soundless-clapping host

As the run-stealers flicker to and fro, To and fro:

O my Hornby and my Barlow, long ago!





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SYDNEY KITCHENS



Hittingacentury

Jacqui Lim has set herself a gastronomical challenge: to eat at all GT's Top 100 restaurants. Mission: improbable?

66 It's not for the weak. It's my version of extreme sport and I dine to win. 99 Many people set themselves challenges. Some climb mountains, some run marathons. But me? I choose the *Gourmet Traveller* Top 100 restaurant list. The challenge? To dine at as many restaurants on the list as possible in any given year. It's gruelling work, but someone has to do it. It takes focus, commitment, stamina and a good metabolism. It's not for the weak, in other words. It's my version of extreme sport and I dine to win.

This year, I will have eaten at 94 establishments on the 2015 list. This doesn't mean I've done all 94 in one year – by my measure, if it's on the list and I've been to it in a previous year it still counts. Every year, several of the restaurants I've already been to fall off the list,

so I have to claw my way back to my previous score and then push to exceed it. Back in 2008, my tally was a mere 49, so I've come a long way. In the past I would simply fit in restaurant bookings whenever I happened to be travelling. Now I plan my travel purely around getting to these restaurants.

Putting together a Top 100 trip is like planning a military operation — choosing the restaurants, finding out what's open for lunch and dinner on what days, trying to get bookings (ensuring an early lunch so I'm hungry enough for dinner), and then it's flights, accommodation, car hire, and booking in friends to dine with me. It's exhausting, but oh-so satisfying. It's not unusual for me to fly somewhere on a Saturday morning, do four Top 100s in two days and be back in time for work on a Monday morning. Once I did eight Top 100s in nine days in New South Wales and Victoria. And I don't just do an entrée or a main course — I go for the full meal with as many courses that are on offer.

You can imagine my nervous excitement when the new list comes out every year — it's a huge day for me. What's on? What's off? What's my starting tally? How many restaurants do I need to get to? Where will I be travelling to?

The 2016 list will be the one — the one where I'll finally be able to say I've been to all 100, and nothing's going to stop me! And then, for a brief moment, I will feel that my life is complete... that is, until the next list. Some may call it obsessive and, yes, it probably is. And so is collecting a business card from every restaurant I eat at — a collection that now contains well over 800 cards.

My food obsession runs deep. I moved to Adelaide from Hobart in 2007 and completed a Master of Arts in Gastronomy through Le Cordon Bleu at the University of Adelaide. I love to cook whenever I get the chance. People are often fascinated with my ongoing dining quest, so this year I started a blog to document and share my food adventures: jacquisfoodfetish.com.au. There you can keep track of my Top 100 progress and read my reviews.

I figure that, over the years, I've been to at least 180 Top 100 restaurants, given at least 10 I've already been to drop off the list each year. Am I the only person who takes on the Top 100 with such determination? I suspect there are plenty more obsessives out there like me. I'd love to see who else takes their passion for restaurants to the same level.

Working my way through the Top 100 lists, I can honestly say I've never had a bad dining experience. Of course, there have been some meals I've enjoyed more than others – three of my most memorable are Momofuku Seiobo, Orana, and Brae – but overall, I'm grateful that the list provides me with a sense of purpose and enables me to dine at the best restaurants across the country.

Now, about 2016...

















ine dining is over, apparently. Share plates, pop-ups, pulled pork, fried chicken and burgers killed it stone dead, and social media kicked it when it was down. Or at least that's the story we're supposed to buy into. But as you slide up to Rockpool, your pulse quickens before you're even through the door. It's darkly glamorous and unashamedly grown-up, capturing your attention not through rules and ruses, but with confidence and command of its material. There's invention on the plate, but mostly the kitchen wows with refinement and good taste. The conversation Neil Perry started about local seafood and international flavours more than two decades ago is no less compelling now that chef Phil Wood is doing much of the talking.

One of the more visible flourishes of late has been the adoption of more and more tableside cooking. Guéridon service is something both Perry and Wood have admired on their travels in France, and Wood thinks it brings something to the table in more ways than one.

"It's just time that waiters started doing a bit more work," he jokes. "But it's nice to have that interaction, and I think we've got a particularly nice floor team at the moment. They're really approachable but professional at the same time, so I really like to have them having more contact with the tables. When it's done poorly it's shocking, but done well it's really lovely, and I think we're getting the right balance. And when you cook fish right at the last moment, it just tastes so different."

The latest example sees a very hot iron pot wheeled to the table, with a puck of salt laid in the base. The waiter slips a fillet of Coorong mullet or King George whiting onto the salt on a leaf of konbu, pours in a little bit of aromatic broth flavoured with cardamom leaves, claps a lid on it, and leaves it for around a minute. Meanwhile, they plate up oca, the yam from New Zealand, and an amandine, in this case an almond butter sauce mixed with a chunky XO sauce, made not on a base of dried shellfish, but rather with dried haddock.

This deft interweaving of elements from the West and the East has always been something Rockpool has done well, but right now the restaurant seems to be right in the zone, as the sportscasters like to say. There's something about the manner in which Wood and his team mingle their influences that keeps things interesting without any sense of straining for effect.

Take the prawn mousse

– an orb of a traditional mousse
of cream and eggs with diced
prawn folded through it, all around
a liquid centre of prawn stock. It's

RESTAURANT OF THE YEAR

flavoured with a Port and Madeira reduction tweaked with jasmine-smoked butter and finished with squid ink, and garnished with fried sourdough breadcrumbs blended with Korean red pepper flakes and some fresh hot red chilli. Texture, flavour, magic.

Wood says that though Perry is deeply engaged with every aspect of the way the restaurant is run, he gives his head chefs the room to move that results in fresh ideas. "As long as the produce is of a high standard, and as long as we're working in a way that's environmental and sustainable, and as long as we're not sacrificing flavour for technique, Neil is happy. That and balance."

That balance extends, too, to the shouldering of responsibility for Rockpool's commitment to excellence between the teams working front- and back-of-house. Sebastian Crowther, one of only two Master Sommeliers in Australia, runs the wine side of things in a way that holds equal appeal for novices and hardcore bottle-strokers alike, while the floor, headed by Silvio Brentan, in collaboration with the courtly Jeremy Courmadias, is in sharper focus than ever before.

Rockpool circa now is the whole package: from a deep bench of talent working the opulent room, to an exciting cellar, savvy, welcoming wine service from star sommelier Crowther, and more than a little of that elusive X-factor. This isn't hospitality cribbed from the internet and practised in the mirror. This is the real thing. And it feels great.>



t might seem unusual that a regional restaurant 130 clicks west of Melbourne serving a chef's menu that takes three hours to complete would be open for lunch on Mondays. But Dan Hunter has been opening for Monday lunch at Brae since he launched the restaurant in 2013. The reason? Many restaurants in the city are closed Mondays, making it one of the only days that chefs and front-of-house staff can get out and about. It's probably a smart move but it's also a respectful one, with Hunter giving his colleagues the opportunity to come and see what's happening down Birregurra way for themselves.

It's a respect that seems to flow both ways. Chef of the Year is the only Gourmet Traveller award that's peer-voted. Chefs from the Top 100 restaurants from last year's Restaurant Guide are asked to name the chef they most respect, and we simply tally the results. This year Hunter was given the very definite nod. Add in the fact that he's cracked the top 100 on the World's Best list this year, and it would seem that chef Hunter has found his happy place.

What is interesting is that his happy place has ended up being the country. "I never really saw myself as being a country chef," he says. "When I was 12 we moved to the country from Melbourne and by the time I was 18 I couldn't wait to get out. I felt like an urban person.

"I've lived in London, in Barcelona, some of the big cities of the world with a lot of great social elements attached to them, but the

CHEF OF THE YEAR



more time I spend working as a chef, the more I've become obsessive about becoming closer to production.

"I like the closer day-to-day conversation with a supplier who's not on the phone, but whose house you go up to and look at what they do and talk to them. I like having that chance to interact on a daily basis with the phases of seasonality." That "really in-yourface", tangible experience with the environment, Hunter says, has become essential to his cooking.

Hunter's menus are certainly finely drawn sketches of the surrounding region, created with robust skill and a confident hand. He has done great things in the past at Mugaritz and the Royal Mail Hotel, but it's at Brae where he's doing his finest work yet. Just ask the chefs.



BAR OF THE YEAR

here may be
Australian bars
that are more
on-trend. There may even
be bars boasting a better
stocked more impressive
top shelf, or a more highly
awarded team.
So what sets The Gresham

So what sets The Gresham apart? Simply put, it's a bastion of old-fashioned hospitality – at its most genuine and inclusive.

Thanks to architecturally significant digs in Brisbane's 19th-century Queensland National Bank building, The Gresham is also the only bar in Queensland operating under a heritage licence.

But it's not just this legal distinction and an absence of trendy trappings that evoke a drinker's nostalgia for more gracious and congenial times. Every aspect of the classic interior – from its soaring ceilings to the dramatic velvet drapes pooling beneath its lofty windows – conspires to conjure an atmosphere of

stylish bygone days. The Gresham is a bar for grown-ups.

Opened in November 2013 by veteran operator Andrew Baturo with business partners Paul Piticco (perhaps better known as founder of the annual Splendour in the Grass festival) and Denis Sheahan (rock band Powderfinger's former tour manager), this city-centre watering hole feels as though it's been standing proudly on Queen Street forever.

Baturo says the brief to the project architects was straightforward – to create a bar that felt like it had always been there, lying hidden but intact beneath the dust covers, and then give it a bit of a spit and polish to bring it up to scratch.

"Brisbane is old enough now to have a sense of history – it's nice to be able to go and have a drink and feel part of the history of the city," Baturo says. "We thought it would take between four and five years to get established, but the way people responded to it, it felt established after the first year."

Properly made drinks cross the handsome bar until 3am every day except Sunday. "When we opened we didn't want to pigeonhole people into using the bar in a certain way – we wanted to see how it evolved," explains Baturo.

The result is a bar with a strong whisky (and whiskey) focus. Head bar honcho Ryan Lane's current list features a notable cache of the hard stuff – everything from the likes of ancient single malts through to \$10 Bulleit Rye, Dry Fly Washington Wheat or an \$8.50 house pour of Rittenhouse 100 Rye.

Craft beer and wine also feature – and of course there's an ultra-sharp list of cocktails, too. Whatever your poison, The Gresham is a bar you can bank on to legitimately lift your spirits. Not just a bar of the year – but a bar for the long haul.





BEST NEW TALENT

efine "new". British-Australian chef Lennox Hastie has worked in restaurants for the past 16 years, clocking serious time at the star-laden likes of Le Manoir aux Quat'Saisons in England, La Maison de Marc Veyrat in France, and Martín Berasategui in Spain. But it was during the five years he spent cooking at Etxebarri, an internationally celebrated shrine to the powers of the hearth in the Basque country, that he found his true metier.

Now at Firedoor, tucked on a side street in Sydney's Surry Hills, he has created a shrine of his own, a place to explore (and savour) the possibilities of cooking with flame. Whether he's working with produce other chefs would kill for (150-day aged grass-fed wagyu rib-eyes, for instance, which he slices to order during service on a bandsaw). or that lesser cooks may discard (the heads of Murray cod, which he pan-roasts to rare succulence), his cooking is marked by a light hand, an approach where invention takes a back-seat to the innate qualities of the ingredients and often the simplest possible handling.

Here at Hastie's first venture of his own, he has carried that spark across the years and oceans, kindling it into a blaze



of excitement, creating a cuisine unlike any other in the country. Oh, and because cooking with fire, even for a past-master, is something very site-specific, we've noticed that the food coming out of the kitchen only seems to be getting better month on month. Look out,



WINE LIST OF THE YEAR

alk about a revolution. Back at the old Billy Kwong restaurant in Surry Hills the wine list was short but good: a single A4 page of well-chosen, mostly organic and biodynamic Australian bottles, reflecting chef Kylie Kwong's commitment to the local and the sustainable. At the new, larger Billy Kwong in Potts Point the approach to wine and drinks is, fittingly, much more ambitious and much more exciting.

The line-up of cutting-edge Australian wines has been boosted by a rollcall of top natural producers from France, Italy, New Zealand and South Africa. The selection of "other drinks" - sakes, spirits, sour beers and so on - is one of the smartest in the country. And the presentation of the list's 16 or so pages is faultless: an articulate statement of the thinking behind the selections; wines arranged enticingly by style - "bubbles for glugging, not sipping"; "white wine for people who think they only like red"; "made to be drunk with Kylie's food: fresh, pungent and bright with acid".

That last description distils the essence of why the list at the new Billy Kwong is so outstanding. The sometimes raw, sometimes edgy characters of natural wines are a perfect fit for Kwong's sometimes edgy, sometimes challenging food. And, crucially, much of what you drink here is produced specifically

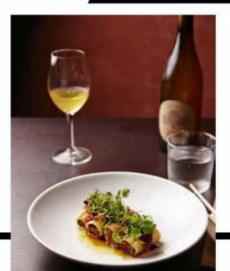
for - or in active collaboration with - the restaurant: small-batch beers from local breweries Young Henrys and Nomad; whisky and gin from Lark; wines from the likes of Lucy Margaux, Si Vintners and Sutton Grange. It's a uniquely appropriate list. It feels so right, gastronomically and philosophically. After all, when you go to a top restaurant you want to eat something you can't eat anywhere else - why shouldn't the same idea apply to what you drink? Putting a bespoke wine and drinks selection together is not easy. The groundwork for the list was laid by Giorgio De Maria (named a GT Sommelier of the Year for his work at Sydney's 121BC, now about to wreak vinous havoc on Melbourne); it's now being nurtured and shaped by beverage manager Nicola Calvert. When we last spoke to Calvert she'd just come back from distillery visits in Tasmania and was about to travel to the Adelaide Hills to help out with bottling the restaurant's next

"I admit I was nervous about heading down the natural-wine path when we opened," Kylie Kwong tells us, "but Nicola's passion has converted me – and our customers have embraced the project wines. People love knowing that what they're drinking is unique, and that we have relationships with the producers who made them.">

naturally fermented, unfiltered

wine. Hard work - but the effort

has paid off.



RICE-NOODLE ROLLS WITH BRAISED BEEF BRISKET AT BILLY KWONG

SYDNEY

Billy Kwong

RESTAURANT AWARDS





"He has the concepts and ideas, obviously, but Joost also has the energy and the passion, the attention to detail, that allows those concepts to become reality. It adds a level of depth and integrity to what he's doing."

Bakker's integrity comes from leading by example. With his Greenhouse projects in Perth, Sydney and Melbourne, and with his café Brothl in Melbourne where meat, dairy and organic matter was turned into compost, milk and mineral water was delivered in reusable kegs and odorous wheelie bins were made redundant. Brothl closed down earlier this year after a stoush with Melbourne City Council about the position of the composting unit, proving that the conversation about waste still has a long way to go.

But there is still a conversation.
Thanks to Bakker, it's happening in other parts of the world, too.
René Redzepi now uses a closed-loop waste system at Noma, and chefs like Alex Atala, Sat Bains and Dan Barber have all introduced aspects of his integrated food chain/composting/packaging-reduction ideas into their businesses.

Add the fact that his
Greenhouse pop-ups and
cafés have been visited by
representatives from companies
outside the élite restaurant world
such as McDonald's and Qantas
(Neil Perry is a fan and Bakker
collaborator), what would once
have been considered a fringe
concept is now becoming a regular
part of the restaurant conversation.

Bakker has also been influential in the realm of restaurant design – his flowerpot and steel mesh constructions particularly so – another example of how his ideas have helped to shape the restaurant industry. And, with a man like Bakker, there will be more ideas on sustainability to come.

As Natalie O'Brien puts it, "He's a man who doesn't take no for an answer."

RESTAURANT AWARDS

Much of her success comes from an ability to read and adapt to the changes in service expectations during the course of her career. The service style is now, she says, "more about reading the way the customer wants to use the space".

"When I first started out in the industry, it was very much drummed into me by my managers that this is the type of restaurant this is and this is the way we do things here," she says. "But those days are gone."

"Service has probably become a bit more complicated because of it, but people now expect you to be flexible and open to creating an experience that they really want. Of course, it's wonderful when people come in and want to embrace the whole experience, and you can take their night to the next level - that's the really joyful part of my job and why I fell in love with the industry - but many people don't want that. For me, it's about recognising what the guest is there for and creating the night that's applicable to their needs. And not judging."

he wonderful

consider that she's

bringing it at four Neil

Rockpool Bar & Grill,

Spice Temple and her

home base at Rosetta,

and the Perth outpost

of Rockpool Bar & Grill.

Crichton has been in the industry for nigh on 20 years now, nearly 10 of them with Perry, and her gracious style of unflappable, charming service seems to have become part of the DNA of those restaurants.

Perry restaurants at the

same time - Melbourne's

sense of ease and

calm that Vanessa

Her role, Crichton says, is to give the customer what they want - so simple-seeming, yet so rare. And she does. Remarkably, given that she's keeping an eye on four restaurants, and cloning has not yet been perfected, she creates the impression of being a constant presence across the four. Present, in charge, a steady hand on the wheel, giving the people what they want. And she has a great sense of humour. What more could you want of a maître d'?>



Vanessa Crichton

ROSETTA, MELBOURNE

this one, we had to take the "new" part of this award more seriously than ever.

Bennelong opened in July, taking

over the smallest sail of the Sydney

out of the gate swinging like

Bennelong

Opera House in the biggest of ways. After Guillaume Brahimi left the site, it looked likely that it was set to become a bold new branch of Melbourne's Stokehouse. Instead it was neighbours from just over the water at Quay who took the reins, and now it's hard to

imagine it being any other way.

A greater variety of dining options and, above all, a larger number of seats have brought welcome buzz to this splendid room, but the transition has been managed with enough TLC by The Fink Group that none of what makes the site special (sacred, even) has been compromised.

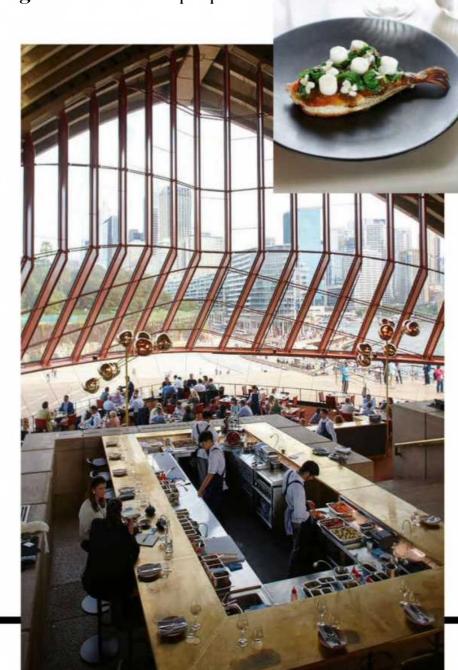
The menus for the restaurant are unmistakably the work of Peter Gilmore (Quay's chocolate cake has made the journey, along with some key staff), yet they've been unstitched and lightened up in a way that makes them all the more approachable. The Cured & Cultured Bar, meanwhile, presents morsels of eye-watering delicacy that can be enjoyed on the fly with a Martini (or savoured over hours with a bottle or two).

One of the country's most original kitchen talents in one of the world's great dining rooms: on paper the concept sparkles and it's our pleasure to report that the execution exceeds all expectations. The Opera House is on song like never before. See review page 77.





One of the country's most original kitchen talents in one of the *world's great dining rooms*: the concept sparkles.















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food

It's the restaurant issue, so whether you bend the rules or take it old-school, spring is looking full of flavour.

The new Italian Sydney is the scene of some of the most innovative takes on Italian cooking as local chefs push the boundaries with a thrillingly free-range approach to la vera cucina.

Greens alight The hottest thing in the kitchen right now is getting greens on the grill, making them charry stars in everything from savoury snacks and sides to a smoky Caesar redux.

A new leaf Chef April Bloomfield is renowned for her meaty cooking, but her new book shows she knows her way around her vegetables, too. *Made at Maude* Curtis Stone has wowed US critics with his thoughtful and creative interpretation of dining. Here's a taste of why.







THE new ITALIAN

Sydney is the perhaps surprising scene of some of the most innovative takes on Italian cooking as a bunch of local chefs push the boundaries with a thrillingly free-range approach to la vera cucina.





ome. Milan. Florence. Sydney? It seems strange to say it, but if you're looking for centres of innovation in Italian cooking today, you might be better off looking outside Italy. There are individual outliers, of course – your Massimo Botturas, your Niko Romitos, your Davide Scabins – but finding a group all pushing the boundaries without losing touch with good taste, all in the one place? In 2015 you'd want to look to a well-known city on the Pacific coast of Australia, roughly 16,000 kilometres from the Italian border, and you'd visit a collection of restaurants that looks very like the group represented in the pages that follow.

In the Italian-Italian camp, we have Alessandro Pavoni of Ormeggio and Giovanni Pilu of Pilu at Freshwater, two chefs with an avowed love of regional cooking (Pilu is the author of an award-winning book about his native Sardinia, and Pavoni's *A Lombardian Cookbook* is published this month), but also an interest in pushing the boat out. They're joined by Federico Zanellato, who was head chef at Ormeggio before opening LuMi in Pyrmont last year.

Two members of the Australian-Italian camp, Acme chef Mitch Orr and Osteria di Russo & Russo's Jason Saxby, honed their pasta-making skills working with Pilu. Our other two players come from further left-field. Icebergs chef Monty Koludrovic was best known for his work heading the Bécasse kitchen, while Daniel Pepperell, who counts Tetsuya's, Marque and Attica among his ports of call, had never cooked so much as a strand of spaghetti professionally before he joined 10 William St.

Ask an Italian-born chef in Sydney what it's all about, and they'll say it's about the breadth of inspiration here coupled with creative freedom. Ask an Australian-born chef the same question and they'll cite the high standard of Italian cooking in Australia, coupled with a life of eating with knife and fork at one meal and chopsticks the next. As Monty Koludrovic puts it: "We are young and we are free."

Asian flavours are a consistent theme. Zanellato draws on Japan to give his dishes a twist, Pepperell rains nori on his carpaccio, while Acme's menu is as likely to reference century eggs and black garlic as it is burrata and bottarga.

Perhaps the key is that these flights of fancy are launched from a springboard of traditional proficiency (not least in the pasta-making department) and an Italianate commitment to freshness and the primacy of ingredients over technique.

Mitch Orr seems to speak for his brethren when he says he doesn't stand around in the kitchen asking himself if his dishes are Italian enough. "Making things taste good – that's always the bottom line." *Certo*.

Carpaccio of kangaroo with beetroot and native fruits

OSTERIA DI RUSSO & RUSSO

"This dish is inspired by traditional dishes of northern Italy where game meat like venison is paired with fruit, and sweet and sour flavours," says Jason Saxby. "I like to think that if the first person who created that combination of wild game with fruit was in Australia at the time, the dish would taste like this." At Osteria di Russo & Russo, Saxby sprinkles the dish with dehydrated beetroot powder made from the beetroot trimmings to minimise waste.

Prep time 1 hr 20 mins, cook 2 hrs (plus freezing, cooling, infusing)

Serves 4 as an entrée or light meal

JASON SAXBY

- 250 gm kangaroo fillet (see note), trimmed of sinew and patted dry with paper towels
- 8 quandongs, halved (and defrosted if frozen; see note)
- 5 radicchio leaves, cut into 4cm rounds with a biscuit cutter Extra-virgin olive oil, finely grated horseradish and purple basil leaves, to serve

Salt-baked beetroot

- 200 gm Murray River pink salt flakes, plus extra, to serve
- 100 ml olive oil
 - 1 tbsp each coarsely chopped thyme and rosemary
 - 1 large beetroot (about 300gm), scrubbed and trimmed without exposing flesh

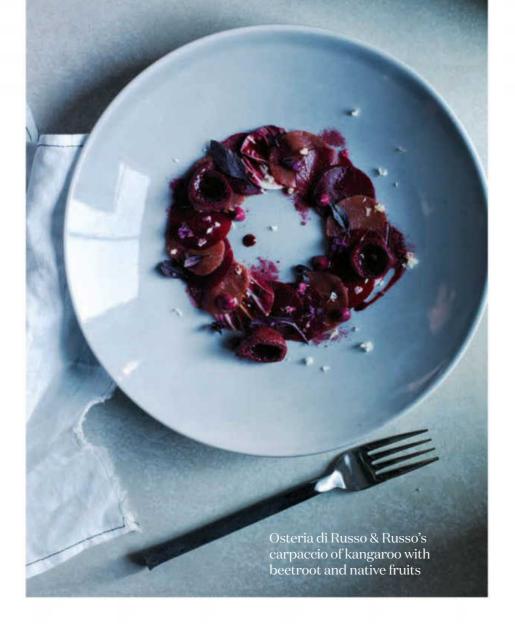
Native currant and beetroot agrodolce

- 350 gm (about 3) small beetroot, trimmed, peeled and quartered
- 125 gm native currants (see note)
- 125 ml (½ cup) merlot vinegar or other aged sweet red wine vinegar
- 60 gm caster sugar

Illawarra plum purée

- 100 gm Illawarra plums, coarsely chopped (see note)
- 25 ml merlot vinegar or other aged sweet red wine vinegar, plus extra to season
- 25 gm caster sugar
- 20 gm cultured butter (such as Pepe Saya), diced





- **1** Roll kangaroo fillet tightly in plastic wrap to form a tight log, seal ends as tightly as you can, and freeze (at least 2 hours). Unwrap and slice meat very thinly, then place in a single layer on a piece of baking paper, cover and refrigerate.
- 2 For salt-baked beetroot, preheat oven to 160C. Combine salt, oil, herbs, 1 tsp coarsely ground black pepper and 60ml water in a bowl. Spread over a piece of foil large enough to enclose beetroot, wrap beetroot and bake directly on an oven rack until beetroot is tender when pierced with a metal skewer (1½-1½ hours). Cool in foil (1½ hours), then unwrap, discard salt crust and wash and peel beetroot, then cut into 2.5cm-thick slices. Cut as many rounds out of each slice as possible with a 4cm round cutter, then slice crossways into thin rounds. Reserve trimmings and refrigerate rounds until required.
- **3** For native currant and beetroot agrodolce, juice beetroot in an electric juicer, place 125ml in a saucepan with currants, vinegar and sugar, bring to the boil, then set aside to infuse for 30 minutes. Strain through a fine strainer, pressing currants with the back of a ladle to extract as much juice as possible. Reserve 100ml liquid, return remaining liquid to a small saucepan, bring to a simmer over medium-high heat and reduce to a sticky syrup (8-10 minutes). Set aside at room temperature.
- **4** Bring reserved agrodolce liquid to a simmer in a separate small saucepan, add quandong and set aside to cool.

- **5** For Illawara plum purée, coarsely chop 100gm reserve beetroot trimmings (discard remaining), then combine with plums, vinegar, sugar and just enough water to cover in a small saucepan. Place a round of baking paper directly on top, then simmer over medium heat until water has almost evaporated, and plums and beetroot are tender (6-8 minutes). Cool briefly, then process in a small blender, adding butter gradually, until smooth. Season to taste with vinegar and sea salt.
- **6** To serve, drizzle kangaroo with olive oil and season to taste, then arrange on serving plates, alternating kangaroo, beetroot and radicchio in a circle, spoon on quandongs, dot with plum purée, scatter with horseradish and purple basil leaves, then drizzle with agrodolce dressing and olive oil to taste.

Note Kangaroo is available from Harris Farm Markets and select butchers and supermarkets. For quandongs, native currants and Illawara plums head to outbackpridefresh.com.au to find your local distributor.

Wine suggestion "Vie di Romans 'Dessimis' Pinot Grigio, of which we have the 2013 vintage," says co-owner Marc Russo. "Drastically different from the expected pinot grigio style, this is an ancient style of pinot grigio with a slight blush, a rich, oily texture and a complex yet clean palate. Vie di Romans, a producer from Friuli, is famed for its textured, complex and often highly aromatic white wines."



Maltagliati with washed kimchi and guanciale

"When we came up with this dish, we were originally looking to do a play on Amatriciana, replacing the chilli content with the heat from the kimchi," says Mitch Orr. "We were thinking about braising the kimchi into a Napoli-style sauce and using that as a base. After [fellow Acme chef] Katie Choi and I talked through the virtues and subtleties of kimchi, and realising that cooking it out kind of muted the umami and punch, we adjusted our idea. We wash the kimchi to lessen its intensity slightly. It's still pork and cabbage – I mean, you can't really go wrong with something as classic as that. It's a good representation of what we do – it's a little bit away from the norm, but really it's still a classic combination. After all, I'm not really that clever."

Prep time 30 mins, cook 15 mins (plus drying, cooling, resting)

Serves 4 as a light meal or entrée (pictured p123)

- 1 bunch cavolo nero, trimmed, stalks removed (about 2 cups, firmly packed)
- 150 gm (²/₃ cup) kimchi
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 100 gm guanciale, diced (see note)
- 2 golden shallots, finely chopped
- 1 garlic clove, crushed
- 50 ml dry white wine
- 20 gm butter, diced
- 50 ml still mineral water at room temperature
 - 1 tsp lemon juice, or to taste Maltagliati
- 4 egg yolks
- 25 ml lightly beaten egg (about ½ egg)
- 1½ tsp extra-virgin olive oil
- 185 gm "00" flour
 - Semolina, for dusting
- 1 Preheat oven to 50C or lowest setting and line 2-3 large oven trays with baking paper. Blanch cavolo nero in a large saucepan of boiling water until tender (30 seconds to 1 minute; see cook's notes p200), then drain and squeeze out excess water out in a tea towel. Spread over prepared trays and dry completely in oven (10-12 hours). Set aside to cool, then process in a blender to a fine powder.
- 2 For maltagliati, combine egg yolks, egg and oil with ½ tsp fine salt in an electric mixer fitted with a dough hook. Add flour and mix on low-medium speed until fine crumbs form. Test by squeezing a handful if dough holds together there's enough moisture; if it crumbles, mix in a small amount of water, then test again. Turn out onto a bench, bring dough together and knead until smooth. Form into a ball, wrap in plastic wrap, press flat and refrigerate to rest (at least an hour or overnight). Bring dough to room temperature and divide into 4 even pieces. Working with a piece at a time, flatten, then roll through a pasta machine, starting>

at the widest setting and dusting with flour as necessary. Fold in half and repeat until pasta is smooth and silky, then continue rolling and folding, reducing settings notch by notch, until dough is 2mm thick. Cut into rough 5cm x 10cm triangles with a crinkle cutter and set aside on a tray dusted with semolina.

- 3 Gently wash kimchi under cold water, leaving a little chilli, drain well and pat dry with paper towels. Coarsely chop and set aside.
- 4 Heat olive oil in a large frying pan over low heat. Add guanciale and render slowly, giving it the occasional stir, until golden and crisp (10-12 minutes). Remove with a slotted spoon and set aside.
- 5 Add shallots and garlic to pan and sauté until tender and translucent (4-5 minutes). Stir in kimchi and guanciale, then deglaze pan with wine. Add butter and mineral water, and toss until emulsified into a creamy sauce (15-30 seconds).
- 6 Cook maltagliati in a large saucepan of boiling salted water until al dente (2-3 minutes). Drain, add to sauce and toss to combine. Check seasoning, add lemon juice and serve with dusted with cavolo nero powder.

Note Guanciale, cured pork cheek, is available from specialist Italian butchers.

Wine suggestion Acme's Gavin Wright suggests Damijan Podversic "Kaplja" Bianco 2006, Friuli.



Parmesan chawanmushi

"Chawanmushi is often served in Japan as part of a kaiseki meal, at the beginning. It's made with eggs, dashi, mirin and soy sauce, steamed and topped with toppings such as shiitake, prawns and lily root," says Federico Zanellato. "We've replaced the dashi and mirin with parmesan consommé and use a rosemary dashi."

Prep time 30 mins, cook 1 hr 20 mins (plus infusing, cooling)

400 ml milk

100 gm Parmigiano-Reggiano, finely grated

125 gm lightly beaten egg (about 2½ eggs)

1½ tsp white soy sauce (see note)

½ tsp usukuchi soy sauce (see note) Baby shiso leaves and extra-virgin olive oil, to serve

Rosemary dashi

- 6 cm piece of konbu (see note)
- gm (1/2 cup firmly packed) bonito flakes
- 1½ tbsp (firmly packed) rosemary leaves



"It's a good representation of what we do - it's a little bit away from the norm, but it's still a classic combination."

1½ tbsp white soy sauce

1½ tbsp mirin (see note)

1/8 tsp xanthan gum (see note)

1 Heat milk in a saucepan over low-medium heat to 80C (4-5 minutes). Add parmesan, stir well to combine, then set aside to infuse (40-50 minutes). Strain through a coarse sieve, then through a coffee filter into a jug, pressing lightly to extract all the liquid; you may need to replace the filters a few times as they become blocked (discard solids). Combine remaining ingredients, except shiso and oil, with 100ml cold water and ½ tsp sea salt flakes, then stir into infused milk. Pass again through a fine sieve and divide among four 160ml bowls. Steam in a large steamer over barely simmering water or in a steamer oven at 85C until just set with a slight wobble in centre (14-16 minutes). Set aside at room temperature.

2 For rosemary dashi, heat konbu and 250ml water in a saucepan over low-medium heat to 60C and maintain heat for 1 hour to infuse.

Discard konbu and bring stock to 85C. Add bonito and rosemary, turn off heat and infuse briefly (10 seconds), then strain through a sieve lined with a double layer of muslin (discard solids) and set aside to cool (30-40 minutes). Add sov sauce, mirin and xanthan gum, blend with a stick blender to dissolve gum, then strain through a very fine sieve.

3 To serve, spoon a little rosemary dashi over chawanmushi (you may have some leftover; see note), scatter with shiso leaves and dot with oil. Note White soy sauce (shiro shoyu), usukuchi soy sauce (light soy), konbu, bonito flakes and mirin are all available from Japanese grocers. Xanthan gum is sold at health-food shops. Dashi will keep refrigerated for a week in an airtight container and can be used as a dressing or for seasoning. Wine suggestion LuMi sommelier Michela Boncagni suggests 2012 Prosecco Borgo Molino Treviso >





Lamb agnolotti with goat's milk yoghurt, mint and sumac

ALESSANDRO PAVONI

ORMEGGIO

"This pasta dish is inspired by Middle Eastern cuisine - I love the combination of flavours that they have with sumac, mint, yoghurt and spit-roasted lamb," says Alessandro Pavoni. "I thought it could work using these flavours in a filled pasta dish and it does. Our food at Ormeggio is a modern interpretation of traditional Italian cuisine, in this case agnolotti, originally from Piedmont, is the traditional part of the dish. We spit-roast the lamb at Ormeggio, but here we've roasted it in the oven." Begin this recipe a day ahead to roast the lamb and strain the herb oil.

Prep time 2 hrs, cook 111/2 hrs (plus cooling, resting)

Serves 6

150 gm finely grated parmesan

- 75 gm butter, softened
- 2 eggs, lightly beaten
- 8 anchovy fillets, finely chopped
- 10 sage leaves, finely chopped
- 2 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil, plus extra to coat

- Goat's milk yoghurt, sumac and parsley cress, to serve Herb oil
- 1 cup (firmly packed) flat-leaf parsley
- 34 cup (firmly packed) mint
- 60 ml (1/4 cup) olive oil Roast lamb
- 100 ml grapeseed oil
 - 3 celery stalks, chopped
 - 1 each large carrot and onion, chopped
- 750 ml dry red wine
- 1 litre (4 cups) chicken stock
- ½ cup (loosely packed) flat-leaf parsley, coarsely chopped
- 1/3 cup (loosely packed) rosemary, coarsely chopped
- garlic clove, finely chopped
- 1 lamb shoulder (1.5kg), bone in (Pavoni uses oyster-cut lamb shoulder) Pasta dough
- 400 gm (23/3 cups) "00" flour
- 200 gm fine semolina flour, plus extra for dusting
 - 8 egg yolks
 - eggs
- 1 For herb oil, process ingredients in a blender until well combined, pour into a sieve lined with muslin placed over a bowl and stand overnight to strain.

- 2 For roast lamb, heat a barbecue or char-grill pan over high heat and an oven to 90C (see note). Heat 80ml grapeseed oil in a flameproof roasting pan over low-medium heat and fry vegetables until golden-brown (30 minutes). Deglaze pan with wine, add stock, increase heat to high and reduce liquid by half (20-25 minutes). Combine herbs, garlic and 2 tsp fine sea salt and rub into lamb, drizzle with remaining oil and barbecue or grill, turning occasionally, until golden-brown (6-8 minutes). Transfer to roasting pan, spoon juices over, cover and roast in oven, basting occasionally, until meat is falling from the bone (10 hours). Set aside to cool (2 hours), then shred meat and coarsely chop (discard bones, skin and fat), place in a bowl and refrigerate.
- **3** Skim fat from pan juices, strain, then reduce to about 100ml in a large frying pan over high heat, stirring often towards the end of cooking (20-25 minutes). Cool briefly, then stir into lamb.
- 4 For pasta dough, combine flour, semolina and a pinch of salt in a bowl. Lightly beat eggs and egg yolks, gradually add to flour, mixing until small balls of dough form, then turn out onto a bench and knead until smooth. Pat into a disc, cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate to rest (30-40 minutes).
- **5** Meanwhile, combine parmesan, butter, eggs, anchovies, sage, extra-virgin olive oil and lemon juice, mix into lamb and refrigerate until required.
- **6** Bring dough to room temperature and divide into 8 pieces. Working with a piece at a time, flatten then roll through a pasta machine, fold in half then roll again until smooth. Continue folding and rolling, reducing settings notch by notch, until you have a 10cm wide, 1mm-thick strip, then halve strip lengthways. With a long edge closest to you, spoon 2 tsp filling 4cm in from the edge, then continue along the strip 4cm-5cm apart. Run a wet finger along the edge closest to you and between fillings, then fold edge over and press to seal around filling. Moisten between fillings again, then fold over top edge to overhang slightly and press between fillings, but not along length, so you have an open flap. Repeat with other half of pasta strip. Cut to separate agnolotti, then squeeze filling gently to plump. Press sides to seal, bending them forward as you do, then trim sides and flap with a crinkle pasta wheel, and set aside on a tray dusted with semolina while you prepare the rest.
- 7 Cook agnolotti in a large saucepan of boiling salted water until al dente and cooked through (3-4 minutes). Transfer to a bowl with a splash of extra-virgin olive oil and toss to combine.
- **8** To serve, spoon yoghurt onto plates, top with agnolotti, dot with herb oil and scatter with parslev cress and sumac.

Note If you prefer to spit-roast the lamb, cook it on a rôtisserie over a coal or wood barbecue on low heat, basting occasionally with butter, for 1 hour 45 minutes, increase heat to medium and baste occasionally for 45 minutes, then cook without basting for a further 15 minutes. Turn off the heat and rest for 30 minutes.

Wine suggestion 2012 Collemattoni Rosso di Montalcino DOC Sangiovese, from Tuscany, is the pick of Ormeggio sommelier, Jeremy Croft.



DAN PEPPERELL 10 WILLIAM ST

Fried chicken alla diavola

"I like to think that if there was an Italian family living in Tennessee watching the Super Bowl on TV right now, this is what they'd be eating," says Dan Pepperell. Begin this recipe three to five days ahead to make the giardiniera, ferment the chillies and marinate the chicken.

Prep time 1 hr, cook 40 mins (plus pickling, fermenting, marinating)

Serves 4

- 4 each chicken Marylands and chicken wings, preferably free-range
- 600 ml buttermilk Vegetable oil, for deep-frying
- 500 gm (3½ cups) plain flour Shichimi togarashi, to serve (see note) Giardiniera
 - 1 green jalapeño chilli
- 375 gm (¼ medium) cauliflower, cut into florets
- 100 gm (½ medium) each red and yellow capsicum, thickly sliced
- 60 gm (½ medium) carrot, thickly sliced with a crinkle cutter
- 500 ml (2 cups) white vinegar
- 45 gm caster sugar
- 2½ tbsp sea salt flakes
 - 1 garlic clove, crushed
 - 1 tsp each black and Sichuan peppercorns, coriander seeds and mustard seeds
 - 1 dill sprig

 Diavola sauce
- 100 gm (about 6) long red chillies, coarsely chopped
 - ½ tsp caster sugar
- 1½ tbsp olive oil
- 5 garlic cloves, coarsely chopped
- 50 gm butter, diced
- 25 ml fish sauce Pinch of xanthan gum (optional; see note)
- 1 For giardiniera, heat a char-grill pan over high heat and grill jalapeño, turning occasionally, until charred (10-12 minutes). Halve lengthways and place in a 1-litre sterilised jar (see cook's notes p200) with remaining vegetables. Bring vinegar, sugar, salt, garlic, spices and 250ml water to the boil in a saucepan, then pour over vegetables, seal, cool to room temperature and refrigerate for 3-5 days to pickle.
- 2 For diavola sauce, combine chilli, sugar and ½ tsp sea salt flakes in a snap-lock bag, seal, squeezing out the air, and leave in a draught-free place for 3-5 days to ferment. Heat olive oil in a saucepan over medium heat, add garlic and sauté until light golden (3-5 minutes). Stir in fermented chilli and cook until liquid evaporates and chilli starts to fry (3-4 minutes), then add butter and 150ml water, and bring to the boil. Add fish sauce,

remove from heat, then process in a blender until smooth. Add xanthan gum and blend to emulsify. Keep sauce warm.

- **3** Cut chicken Marylands into drumsticks and thighs, then place in a plastic container with chicken wings and buttermilk, and refrigerate overnight to marinate.
- 4 Bring chicken to room temperature and heat oil in a deep-fryer to 160C. Place flour in a bowl and season to taste. Remove chicken from buttermilk, coat well in flour, shaking off excess, then deep-fry in batches until golden-brown and cooked through (7-7½ minutes; be careful hot oil may spit). Place chicken in a bowl, pour diavola sauce over, toss to coat and serve scattered with giardiniera and shichimi togarashi.

Note Shichimi togarashi, a Japanese spice blend, is available from Japanese grocers and select Asian supermarkets. Xanthan gum is available from health-food shops; you can leave it out, but it creates a thick sauce that coats the chicken well. **Wine suggestion** "2013 Monastero Suore Cistercensi Coenobium 'Ruscum' from Lazio, an orange wine made by nuns," says sommelier Matt Young of 10 William St.

Gnocchi with spicy pipi sauce and

ICEBERGS DINING ROOM & BAR

MONTY KOLUDROVIC

"This dish originated through my love of pipis as a kid, and subsequent love of spicy and intense pipi with XO sauce as an adult," says Monty Kulodrovic. "This dish is Italian at heart, yet for me, it also celebrates the freedom we have in Australia to be proud of who we all are, and also who our neighbours are." Begin this recipe a day ahead to soak the shrimp, dry the potato and infuse the herb oil.

Prep time 1 hr 30 mins, cook 1 hr 45 mins (plus infusing, chilling)

Serves 4 (pictured p119)

500 gm rock salt

wild herbs

- 1 kg (about 4) even-sized floury potatoes, such as sebago or King Edward, scrubbed
- 100 gm Parmigiano-Reggiano, finely grated1 large egg (65gm)
- 225 gm "00" flour>



Pinch of freshly grated nutmeg

- 2 tbsp olive oil
- tbsp finely chopped prosciutto
- 2 black garlic cloves, peeled, coarsely chopped (see note)
- 1 garlic clove, crushed
- 1 red birdseye chilli, finely chopped
- ½ tsp saffron threads
- kg pipis, soaked in salted water for 1 hour to remove sand, drained

200 ml fish stock

tbsp coarsely chopped herbs, such as flat-leaf parsley, tarragon and dill Small wild leaves (wood sorrel, fat hen or baby nasturtiums; see note), to serve Lemon wedges, to serve



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Soapstone coaster from



Spice paste

- 25 gm dried shrimp with good bright colouring, soaked in 60ml water overnight
- 25 ml olive oil
- 40 gm (¼ cup) capers in vinegar, drained and rinsed
- 20 gm prosciutto, finely chopped
- garlic cloves, finely chopped
- golden shallot, finely chopped
- long dried chilli, coarsely chopped
- 1 small fresh bay leaf
- 1 tsp lemon thyme
- 1 For herb oil, blanch herbs until bright green (2 minutes; see cook's notes p200), then refresh in iced water. Drain well and squeeze out excess water, then process with olive oil in a blender on high speed until smooth (3 minutes). Cover and refrigerate overnight to infuse, then bring to room temperature and strain through a fine sieve without pushing solids.
- 2 Preheat oven to 180C. Spread rock salt on an oven tray and place potatoes on top and bake until very tender when pierced with a skewer (about 1½ hours). Scoop out flesh (discard skins), pass through a potato ricer or sieve and refrigerate to cool (about 2 hours).
- **3** For spice paste, drain shrimp, reserving 2 tbsp liquid, coarsely chop and set aside. Heat oil in a saucepan over medium heat, add shrimp and fry, scraping it from base, until just toasted (3-4 minutes). Add capers, prosciutto, garlic, shallot, chill and herbs, and sauté until shallot is soft (3-4 minutes). Add reserved liquid and cook until evaporated (30 seconds to 1 minute). Discard bay leaf and process sauce in a small blender until smooth. Set aside to cool.
- 4 Combine potato, parmesan, egg and 200gm flour in a bowl, season to taste with nutmeg and sea salt, then mix well, adding remaining flour as necessary to form a smooth dough (depending on dryness of potato, you might not need extra flour). Turn out onto a lightly floured bench, roll dough into 1.5cm-thick ropes and cut into 1.5cm pieces, dust with flour and place on a lightly floured tray.
- **5** Heat olive oil in a large saucepan over medium heat. Add prosciutto, black and fresh garlic, chilli, saffron and spice paste, stir to combine, then add pipis and fish stock, cover and cook until pipis open (3-4 minutes). Remove pipis and set aside. Stir butter into sauce along with herbs, season to taste, then brush pipi flesh with a little sauce. Keep pipis and sauce warm separately.
- **6** Cook gnocchi in a large saucepan of boiling salted water until they float (2-3 minutes). Transfer to sauce with a slotted spoon and toss gently to coat (10-20 seconds). Spoon gnocchi onto warm plates, arrange pipis on top, scatter with wild leaves, dot with herb oil and serve with lemon wedges.

Note Black garlic, which has been aged and fermented, is available from select grocers and online at tasmanianblackgarlic.com.au. The availability of wild leaves depends on your location. Nasturtium leaves are available from

select greengrocers and may need to be ordered ahead. Substitute young green salad leaves.

Wine suggestion "A fresh, minerally, juicy Quantico Etna Bianco DOP with hints of preserved lemon, fennel and chamomile is big enough to stand up to the fragrance and spice of the sauce, while adding freshness," says Monty Kulodrovic.



Corbezzolo honey mousse with pepperberry sponge and beer sorbet

"Incorporating local ingredients into my dishes reinforces the importance of regionalism in Italian cooking - it's about being true to what's local rather than sourcing something from overseas," says Giovanni Pilu. "In this recipe I use both local and Sardinian ingredients; the corbezzolo honey from Sardinia gives a unique, slightly bitter flavour, which balances the sweetness of the mousse and the peppery flavours in the sponge." Start this recipe a day ahead to make the spiced orange syrup. Prep time 1 hr 30 mins, cook 45 mins (plus cooling, chilling, churning, freezing, infusing) Serves 6-8

- 7 egg yolks (125gm)
- 55 gm (¼ cup) caster sugar
- 135 gm corbezzolo honey (see note)
- titanium-strength gelatine leaves, softened in cold water for 5 minutes
- 250 ml (1 cup) pouring cream, whisked to soft peaks Coarsely chopped salted roasted macadamias, lemon thyme leaves and vincotto, to serve

Orange spice syrup

- 100 ml freshly squeezed orange juice
- 50 gm caster sugar
- 1/2 each star anise and cinnamon quill
- 2 cardamom pods
- small clove

Beer sorbet

- 460 ml Ichnusa beer (see note)
- 100 ml sugar syrup (see note)
- 2½ tsp lemon juice

Pepperberry sponge

- 150 gm unsalted butter, softened
- 75 gm each brown sugar and caster sugar
- ½ tsp Tasmanian ground pepperberry (see note)
- 150 gm (1 cup) plain flour, sieved
- 1¾ tsp baking powder, sieved







The hottest thing in the kitchen right now is getting greens on the grill, making them charry stars in everything from savoury snacks and sides to a smoky Caesar redux.

RECIPES & FOOD STYLING EMMA KNOWLES PHOTOGRAPHY BEN DEARNLEY STYLING LYNSEY FRYERS-HEDRICK WINE SUGGESTIONS MAX ALLEN







Char-grilled broccoli with feta and charred-lemon dressing

Broccoli shows another side of itself when it's charred on the edges and still slightly crunchy. Slice the broccoli through the stems to keep the slices intact – this makes for much easier handling on the grill. We'll happily eat this as a light meal in its own right, but it would also be excellent served alongside grilled lamb or chicken.

Prep time 25 mins, cook 10 mins Serves 4 as a light meal

- 2 small heads of broccoli, thick stalks trimmed, thickly sliced
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 1½ lemons, cut into cheeks
- 100 ml (½ cup) extra-virgin olive oil
 - 2 tbsp red wine vinegar, or to taste
 - 1 garlic clove, finely chopped
- $\frak{1}{2}$ cup each coarsely chopped mint and flat-leaf parsley
- 1/4 Spanish onion, thinly sliced
- 100 gm Greek feta, crumbled Slivered pistachios, to serve
- 1 Bring a char-grill pan or barbecue to high heat. Drizzle broccoli with olive oil, season to taste and grill, turning occasionally, until charred and tender (8-10 minutes). Set aside. Grill lemon cheeks, turning occasionally, until charred and softened (6-8 minutes), then set aside.
- **2** Squeeze the juice from one of the lemon cheeks into a bowl, then finely chop the cheek and add to juice along with extra-virgin olive oil, vinegar and garlic, and whisk to combine. Season to taste and set aside.
- **3** Coarsely chop half of the broccoli and combine in a bowl with mint, parsley, onion and feta, season to taste and toss to combine. Drizzle with dressing to taste and toss again to coat.
- 4 Arrange broccoli slices on a serving platter, drizzle with a little more dressing, then pile chopped broccoli mixture on top. Scatter with pistachios and serve with charred lemon cheeks. Wine suggestion Barrel-fermented sauvignon blanc.

Grilled witlof, mint and almond salad with blackened mandarin

Witlof makes a damn fine ingredient for grilling. We've offset its bitter qualities with sweet juicy mandarin and fragrant mint, and added crunch with roasted almonds. A dusting of smoky paprika would be a delicious finishing touch too. This salad would be excellent paired with char-grilled tuna or mackerel.

Prep time 15 mins, cook 10 mins (plus cooling) Serves 4 as a light meal or side

- 6 white witlof, trimmed and quartered lengthways
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 4 mandarins, 2 unpeeled and halved, 2 peeled, pith removed and separated into segments
- 1/4 Spanish onion, thinly sliced
- 70 ml extra-virgin olive oil
- 1½ tbsp Sherry vinegar
 Juice of ½ lemon, or to taste
- ½ garlic clove, finely chopped Mint and coarsely chopped roasted almonds, to serve

- 1 Bring a char-grill pan or barbecue to high heat. Drizzle witlof with olive oil, season to taste and grill, turning occasionally, until slightly wilted (4-5 minutes). Meanwhile, grill mandarin halves, cut-side down, until scorched (3-4 minutes).
- 2 Transfer witlof to a bowl and add mandarin segments and onion. Squeeze the juice of one of the blackened mandarins into a bowl, add extra-virgin olive oil, vinegar, lemon juice and garlic, season to taste and whisk to combine. Drizzle dressing over witlof mixture, season to taste and toss to combine. Leave to cool slightly, then scatter with mint and almonds, and serve with remaining blackened mandarin halves to squeeze over to taste.

Wine suggestion Medium-dry spätlese riesling.>

Grilled Caesar salad

Ubiquity (and chicken) in the '80s and '90s gave Caesar salad a bad name, but here we bring it bang up to date by treating the lettuce to a quick flash on a very hot grill. While you're at it, you can do the same with the bacon and croûtons. Be sure to serve the salad straight from the grill for maximum smokiness.

Prep time 25 mins, cook 15 mins (plus cooling) Serves 4-6 as a light meal (pictured p128)

- 6 eggs, at room temperature
- 4 baby cos lettuce, outer leaves reserved for another use, hearts halved lengthways
- 12 thin baguette slices
- 6 bacon rashers, rind trimmed Olive oil, for drizzling
- 1 garlic clove, halved
- 8 anchovy fillets, halved lengthways
 Coarsely chopped flat-leaf parsley and
 finely grated parmesan, to serve
 Anchovy-garlic dressing
- 1 egg, at room temperature
- 4 anchovy fillets
- 2 garlic cloves, finely chopped
- 60 gm (¾ cup) finely grated parmesan
- 1½ tbsp each lemon juice and red wine vinegar, or to taste
- 2 tsp Dijon mustard
- 60 ml (1/4 cup) olive oil

- **1** Soft-boil eggs (7 minutes), then refresh, peel and set aside.
- **2** For anchovy-garlic dressing, boil egg until just coddled (2 minutes), crack into a bowl and break up with a whisk. Pound anchovies and garlic with a mortar and pestle to a coarse paste, add to egg along with parmesan, lemon juice and vinegar, and season to taste. Whisking continuously, gradually add oil in a thin steady stream and whisk until emulsified. Refrigerate until required.
- **3** Heat a char-grill pan or barbecue to high heat. Drizzle cos hearts, baguette slices and bacon with oil and grill in batches (1-2 minutes for cos hearts, 2-3 minutes for baguette and bacon). Rub croûtons while still warm with the cut-side of garlic clove.
- **4** To serve, arrange cos on a platter, crumble croûtons and bacon over, then top with torn egg and scatter with anchovies. Drizzle generously with anchovy-garlic dressing and finish with flat-leaf parsley and grated parmesan.

Wine suggestion Yeasty, complex late-disgorged sparkling wine.

Charred rainbow chard with garlic crostini and hummus

Charred chard – it has a certain ring to it, and rainbow chard with its robust leaves and beautifully coloured stems is excellent on the barbecue. We've piled it on garlicky crostini spread with hummus. A crumble of salty feta wouldn't go astray either.

Prep time 20 mins, cook 10 mins

Serves 4-6 as a snack (pictured p129)

- 4 rainbow chard stems, stalks and leaves separated and left whole
- 50 ml olive oil
- ½ cup each coarsely chopped flat-leaf parsley and dill
- 1 spring onion, thinly sliced
- 12 thick slices sourdough bread
- 1 garlic clove, halved Hummus, to serve Roast chilli dressing
- 1 tsp dried chilli flakes, or to taste
- 60 ml extra-virgin olive oil
- 1½ tbsp white wine vinegar Finely grated rind and juice of ½ lemon, or to taste
 - 1 garlic clove, finely grated
- **1** For roast chilli dressing, dry-roast chilli flakes in a frying pan until darkened (30 seconds; see cook's notes p200). Tip into a jar, add remaining ingredients, season to taste and shake to combine well. Shake well just before using.
- **2** Heat a char-grill pan or barbecue to high heat. Drizzle silverbeet stems and leaves with half the oil and toss to coat well. Grill stems and leaves separately, turning occasionally, until charred (4-5minutes for stems, 2-3 minutes for leaves).

When cool enough to handle, thinly slice stems and coarsely chop leaves, transfer to a bowl, add herbs and spring onion, drizzle with dressing and toss to combine.

3 Drizzle bread slices with remaining oil, season to taste and char-grill, turning occasionally, until toasted (3-4 minutes). Rub with cut-side of garlic, spread with hummus, pile rainbow chard mixture on top and serve.

Wine suggestion A full-flavoured Italian white such as fiano.

Charred broccolini with kingfish, miso and sesame

We're used to seeing protein as the hero of many dishes, but here we have kingfish playing a supporting role to charred broccolini, acting more as part of the dressing than the main event. Trim off just the very ends of the broccolini – the long slender stems make great eating and should never go to waste.

Prep time 20 mins, cook 10 mins

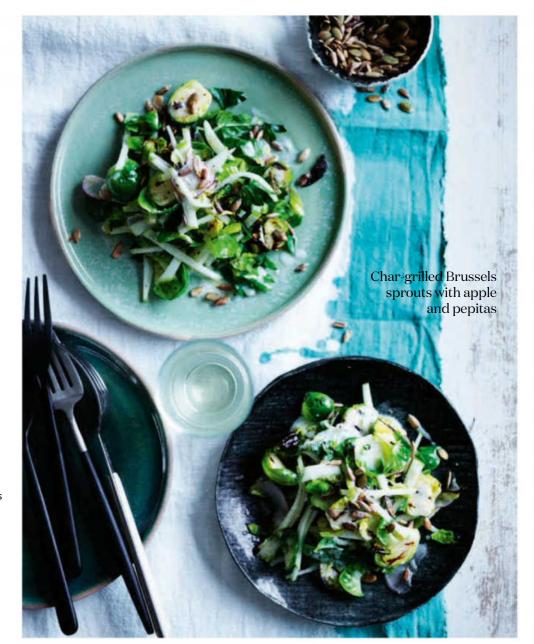
Served 4-6 as an entrée or light meal

- 2 bunches broccolini
- 1 tbsp grapeseed oil
- 1 tsp sesame oil
- 1 sheet nori
- 200 gm sashimi-quality kingfish, diced Roasted sesame seeds, shiso cress and thinly sliced spring onion, to serve Miso dressing
 - 2 tbsp brown rice vinegar
- 1½ tbsp shiro miso (see note)
 - 1 tbsp soy sauce
- 2 tsp mirin
- 60 ml grapeseed oil
 - 1 tsp sesame oil
 - 1 tbsp julienned ginger
- 1 Heat a char-grill pan or barbecue to high heat. Toss broccolini in combined grapeseed oil and sesame oil and season to taste, then grill, turning occasionally, until just tender and slightly charred on the edges (8-10 minutes). Arrange on a platter. Quickly grill nori until crisp (30 seconds) and set aside.
- 2 Meanwhile, for miso dressing, whisk vinegar and miso in a bowl until smooth, whisk in soy sauce and mirin, then whisk in oils until emulsified. Stir in ginger and set aside.
- **3** Scatter kingfish over broccolini and drizzle with miso dressing to taste. Scatter with sesame seeds, shiso cress and spring onion, crumble nori over to taste and serve.

Note Shiro (white) miso paste is available from Japanese and Asian grocers and health-food stores.

Wine suggestion Skins-fermented sauvignon blancs





Char-grilled Brussels sprouts with apple and pepitas

Brussels sprouts come up trumps when cooked on the grill, although it must be said they're a little fiddly to handle. The pay-off comes with deep flavour and a contrast of textures - we've kept the outer leaves raw, while the charred hearts become tender and caramelised. This makes a perfect accompaniment to roast pork, or you could crisp up a couple of slices of speck on the grill and crumble them over the lot for a more substantial meal.

Prep time 20 mins, cook 20 mins

Serves 4-6 as a side

- 400 gm Brussels sprouts, tough outer leaves discarded, tender outer leaves reserved separately, hearts thickly sliced lengthways
 - 1 tbsp olive oil
 - 2 Granny smith apples, cut into julienne and tossed in juice of 1/2 lemon
 - 4 radishes, thinly sliced on a mandolin
 - 1 golden shallot, thinly sliced
- ½ cup coarsely chopped flat-leaf parsley Toasted pepita dressing
- 1½ tbsp each olive oil and hazelnut oil
- 2 tbsp pepitas
- 1 garlic clove, finely chopped Finely grated rind and juice of 1/2 lemon
- 1 tbsp red wine vinegar, or to taste
- 1 For toasted pepita dressing, heat oils in a saucepan over medium-high heat, add pepitas and cook, stirring occasionally, until just starting to change colour (1-2 minutes). Remove from heat, stir in garlic and lemon rind, cool slightly, then stir in lemon juice and vinegar to taste. Season to taste and set aside.
- 2 Heat a char-grill pan or barbecue to high heat. Combine Brussels sprouts hearts and oil in a bowl. season to taste and toss to coat evenly. Grill in batches, turning occasionally, until tender and lightly caramelised (10-15 minutes). Transfer to a bowl, add outer leaves and toss to combine. Add apple, radish, shallot and parsley, drizzle with toasted pepita dressing to taste, toss to coat and serve warm or at room temperature.

Wine suggestion Rich pinot gris.

Scorched iceberg lettuce and spring onion with black vinegar and ginger

Despite its high water content, iceberg is excellent char-grilled - just be sure the grill is very hot so the edges of the lettuce curl and scorch, which imparts a beautiful complexity. We love this served alongside grilled or steamed fish or prawns.

Prep time 20 mins, cook 5 mins Serves 4-6 as a side

- 1 iceberg lettuce, outer leaves removed, cut into 8 wedges
- 6 spring onions, trimmed
- 1 tbsp vegetable oil **Black vinegar dressing**
- 60 ml (1/4 cup) vegetable oil
- 2 tbsp Chinkiang vinegar (see note)
- 1 tbsp soy sauce
- 20 gm ginger, peeled and cut into julienne
- 2 tsp roasted chilli paste
- 1 garlic clove, finely grated Lemon juice, to taste

- 1 For black vinegar dressing, shake ingredients in a jar, season to taste with freshly ground black pepper and set aside.
- 2 Heat a char-grill pan or barbecue to high. Place lettuce wedges and spring onions on a tray, drizzle with oil and turn to coat. Grill lettuce, turning once, until edges char (1-2 minutes each side), then set aside. Grill spring onions, turning occasionally, until charred and wilted (2-3 minutes). Set aside.
- **3** Coarsely chop lettuce and spring onions and combine in a bowl with a little black vinegar dressing, toss to combine and serve with extra black vinegar dressing.

Note Chinkiang vinegar, a fragrant black vinegar, is available from Asian grocers.

Wine suggestion Tangy dry chenin blanc.







've developed a bit of a reputation for meat, particularly the odd parts - what I call the not-so-nasty bits. I certainly adore trotters and kidneys and liver. I get chuffed about a roast dinner or sticky veal shank or a good burger. Yet lamb shoulders and suckling pigs are sort of like action films - you like them, but you probably don't want to watch them *all* the time. And not even the juiciest steak or most crisp pig's ear gets me happy like nice peas.

My affection for vegetables really took off when I started at The River Cafe in London, working for Rose Gray and Ruth Rogers. I was swept up by their obsessions, especially the vegetables they sourced from Italy. There were proper Florence fennel and artichokes and celeriac that Rose and Ruth brought in by the pallet. Until then, these were things I liked all right but didn't really understand. I knew celeriac to be a pleasant, if unremarkable root whose main distinction was that it was knobbly, and a bit homely. Not at The River Cafe. There it was dense and sweet. A sniff at the base would yield that floral aroma, just as it would when I sniffed a ripe melon.

I don't like to think of cooking, eating and enjoying vegetables as something you do while you're not eating meat. While A Girl and Her Greens, my new book, is about vegetables, not all the recipes are vegetarian. I like cooking my collards with lots of bacon. Anchovies give so many vegetables a lift. Some vegetables even turn meaty on you. Red onion gives sauces and soups a meatiness that other onions don't. Mushrooms give off an inviting scent as they sear, which makes me think of veal kidneys. Artichoke hearts have a fleshy texture. Boiled asparagus can be juicy. I'm not saying that vegetables should aspire to be like meat. I'm just saying that meat-eaters will appreciate these qualities, and that vegetables can satisfy you the way meat does.



When I told a friend I was working on a vegetable cookbook, he said that this made sense, since vegetables have become so trendy. I had a good laugh at that. I guess I must have lost the plot somewhere along the way, because I still don't think beetroot, carrots, asparagus are cool. I do, however, think that they're delicious. That's good enough for me. aprilbloomfield.com

Spring egg drop soup

"I hate muddling through a long winter only to suffer those odd early spring months when the weather is finally warming up, but the markets don't seem to have noticed," says April Bloomfield. "Spring produce takes a while to shake off the cold. So when it does, an excitable cook like me tends to go overboard. I pop to the market to grab a bunch of asparagus and return weighed down by bags and bags of spring goodies. I want to use them all without cooking a dozen different dishes. So I make a nice soup, one flaunting a last-minute drizzle of eggs beaten with a little parmesan so they set in silky, fatty strands. A variety of veg is fantastic here, but feel free to use just asparagus or just peas, if that's what you've got or what you like."

Serves 4

230

- 55 ml extra-virgin olive oil
- 225 gm young carrots (about 2½ carrots), topped, tailed, peeled, cut into 1cm pieces
- gm bulbous spring onions, chopped into 1cm pieces 3 slim spring garlic heads (or 1 bulbous),
 - roots and tops trimmed, tough layers removed, thinly sliced
- 900 ml chicken stock
- 225 gm asparagus (1¾ bunches), woody ends snapped off, cut diagonally into 1cm pieces

- 110 gm sugar snap peas, trimmed, strings removed, and cut on the diagonal into 5mm pieces
- 100 gm shelled fresh peas (from about 300gm of pods)
 - 2 large eggs
 - 2 tbsp finely grated parmesan A five-finger pinch of mint leaves, roughly chopped at the last minute A five-finger pinch of basil leaves. roughly chopped at the last minute
- 1 Heat the oil in a wide heavy saucepan over medium heat until it shimmers. Add the carrots first, then the onion, garlic, and 2 tsp of Maldon or another flaky sea salt. Cover and cook, stirring only after 5 minutes have passed and occasionally thereafter, until the onions are soft and creamy but not coloured (about 25 minutes).
- 2 Uncover, add all but 1 tbsp of the chicken stock, increase the heat to high, and bring the stock to a vigorous simmer. Add the asparagus and both kinds of peas and cook just until they're tender with a slight crunch (about 3 minutes).
- 3 Meanwhile, beat the eggs with the parmesan, a pinch of flaky sea salt, and the remaining tablespoon of stock.

4 When the green vegetables are ready, reduce the heat to low, stir in the herbs, then drizzle the egg mixture here and there over the soup. Have a very gentle stir, wait a minute or two until the egg sets, then take the pan off the heat. Season to taste with salt (be judicious, or else you'll obscure the flavour of the vegetables), then squeeze in just enough lemon juice to add brightness, not acidity. Allow the soup to cool slightly before you dig in.

Hasselback potatoes with lardo and rosemary

"Rumour has it that these potatoes were invented at a restaurant in Stockholm called Hasselbacken," says Bloomfield. "Whoever came up with them is clever, indeed. The technique involves making parallel slits the length of the potato, cutting into but not completely through each spud and then roasting them so they expand like an accordion and get extra crisp as they cook. The result is potatoes you want to eat with your hands. When I make this dish, I like to tuck a sliver of lardo in some of those slits. As the potatoes cook, the lardo melts, basting the potatoes and going all crisp itself. Tucking in the lardo can be fiddly and take a while. (You might call it a bit of a hassle, if you don't mind bad puns.) Keep at it. Remember that>



lardo cooperates better when it's well chilled and that these are special-occasion potatoes well worth the effort. But if you get really grumpy, stick to two or three pieces of lardo per potato rather than four or five." Serves 4-6 as a side

900 gm small, non-waxy potatoes (about 16, the size and shape of an egg), scrubbed

- 50 gm lardo, well chilled, thinly sliced
- 55 ml extra-virgin olive oil
- 3 rosemary sprigs
- 1 Position a rack in the centre of the oven and preheat to 200C.
- **2** Working with a potato at a time, cut through the potato crosswise every 4mm-5mm as though you were cutting the potato into slices but stopping about 5mm before you reach the bottom. (I like to insert a thin skewer or cake tester lengthwise through the potato and stop cutting when I hit the skewer.) Repeat with the remaining potatoes. Rinse the potatoes well under water, carefully pulling open the slits to expose the flesh to the water, then drain well.
- 3 Cut the lardo slices crosswise into pieces about as long as the width of each potato. Tuck the pieces of lardo inside some of the slits (2-5 pieces per potato, depending on your mood), being careful not to break the potatoes. It's nice if

a portion of each piece of lardo is sticking out. You might want to keep half the lardo in the fridge as you work so it stays firm and will therefore be easier to work with.

- 4 Arrange the potatoes, lardo side up, in a heavy enamelled baking dish large enough to fit them with a little space between each. Drizzle on the oil, making sure each potato gets some, and sprinkle a healthy pinch of sea salt over each. Bake the potatoes, rotating the dish occasionally, until the visible lardo turns golden brown and crisp and the slits begin to open up a bit (say about 45 minutes).
- **5** Carefully tip the dish so the fat pools, then use a spoon to baste each potato. Keep cooking, basting once more, until the potato flesh is creamy (about 30 minutes more). Baste once more, then flip the potatoes and cook until the bottoms are starting to look good and crisp (about 15 minutes).
- 6 Add the rosemary to the baking dish, resting some of the potatoes on and others near the sprigs so they pick up some of the rosemary's flavour, and cook for another 5 minutes or so. Baste one final time, season with sea salt to taste, then transfer the potatoes to a plate, drizzling a little of the flavourful fat over the top, if you wish. Serve straightaway.

Dosai with curried cauliflower and voghurt

"I don't think I'd ever had a dosa, a type of crêpe made from a fermented lentil and rice batter, before coming to New York," says Bloomfield. "My hometown of Birmingham has a big Pakistani and Indian population, but not so many people from South India, where the dosa comes from. Vegetarianism goes hand in hand with religion there, so creative cooks have come up with an entire universe of incredibly tasty, sophisticated and satisfying meatless food. Even though the dosa comes from a place with a hot climate, I find it perfect for eating in chilly weather. The first time I had a dosa, I ordered a couple of types at a restaurant, not quite knowing what to expect. The waiter arrived bearing this massive golden, crisp cylinder, which was almost twice as long as the plate it came on. Another version was smaller, softer and spongier, but just as delicious. Its fermented tang reminded me of parmesan. I ate quickly, because they were so good and because I could barely wait to have a go at making them myself. It turns out that once you get the hang of it, they're pretty easy to replicate at home (well, not so much those massive ones). Of course, if you're like me, you'll be shit-scared at mucking up the first few. To help, this recipe makes plenty of batter. And even your unsuccessful practice dosa will be tasty to nibble on." Start this recipe at least a day ahead to ferment the batter.

Serves 6 as a main

Extra-virgin olive oil, for frying

- 75 gm Greek yoghurt mixed with a small handful of chopped young coriander sprigs Dosa batter
- 400 gm basmati rice
- 200 gm white urad dal (see note)
- 50 mg chana dal (see note) **Curried cauliflower with peas**
- 3 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 medium Spanish onion (about 225gm), halved lengthwise and thinly sliced
- 3 medium garlic cloves, thinly sliced
- 1 red birdseye or other small, spicy fresh chilli, thinly sliced (including seeds)
- 1 small head cauliflower, trimmed and cut into 5cm x 5cm florets
- 2 generous tbsp very thinly sliced coriander
- 150 gm drained and finely chopped canned whole tomatoes
- 3 tsp garam masala
- 300 gm frozen baby peas
 - 1 heaped tbsp Greek yoghurt
- 1 For the dosa batter, combine the rice and the both types of dal in a large mixing bowl and add 2.2 litres of water. Stir well and cover the bowl with cheesecloth or a lid left slightly ajar. Leave the bowl at room temperature (and away from any cool draughts) to ferment until the mixture smells slightly sour and looks a bit frothy (about 24 hours). If you like your dosa a little more sour, which I do, let it ferment for another 12-24 hours. Drain the rice mixture, reserving 900ml of the liquid. Blend the rice mixture with 675ml of the reserved liquid until completely smooth, gradually adding up to another 225ml of the liquid if

necessary to achieve a texture like that of pouring cream. When you're ready to make the dosa, stir in 1 tsp of sea salt until it has dissolved.

- **2** For the curried cauliflower with peas, heat the oil in a medium saucepan over medium-high heat until it smokes lightly. Add the onion, stir well, and cook, stirring occasionally, until wilted and just beginning to colour (about 3 minutes). Add the garlic and chilli and cook, stirring, until the onion has browned in spots (3-5 minutes more).
- **3** Add the cauliflower and coriander stems to the pan and cook, stirring occasionally, just until the cauliflower has picked up some of the brown colour from the onion (about 2 minutes). Add the tomatoes, garam masala, 1 tsp of sea salt and cook, stirring frequently, until the tomato is thick and jammy (about 5 minutes). Stir in the peas and 110ml of water, scraping the sides and bottom of the pan to get at that nice browned stuff. Pop a lid on, reduce the heat to maintain a steady simmer, and cook, stirring occasionally, until the cauliflower is fully tender but not mushy and the liquid has thickened a bit (about 20 minutes; you might have to remove the lid for the last 5 minutes to help the liquid evaporate). Stir in the yoghurt, turn off the heat and let the curry sit covered for a few minutes so the flavours can meld. Keep warm. The curry keeps for a day or two in the fridge. Add a splash of water and gently warm it before serving.
- 4 Heat a large non-stick frying pan over medium heat until it's good and hot. Before you cook the first dosa, add about 1/2 tsp of oil to the pan and swirl the pan to coat the bottom as best you can. Between dosai, wipe the pan clean with paper towels. Stir the batter well before making each dosa. Spoon about 3 tbsp batter into the centre of the pan and, using an implement with a flat bottom, such as a metal measuring cup, spread the batter into a very thin round, about 20cm in diameter. Start in the centre and spread the batter outwards using a circular motion. You need a really light touch to get the batter nice and thin without creating any big holes (tiny holes form naturally and that's a good thing). You'll get better with each one you make - and you have plenty of batter, so don't fret if you bungle the first few. I often do. After spreading the batter, add a very light drizzle of oil and a light sprinkle of sea salt to the surface of the dosa. Let the dosa cook, without messing with it, until the edges begin to brown and lift from the pan and the underside is a light golden colour (1½-2 minutes). Use a spatula to gently lift an edge, then transfer the dosa to a plate; it should come away from the pan easily and cleanly. Spoon curried cauliflower on one side of the dosa. Add a dollop of coriander yoghurt and fold the dosa over the filling to make a semicircle and serve straightaway, then get to work on the remaining dosai.

Note Urad dal are small black beans that resemble split lentils, and come in several forms: whole, split, and split and husked. For this recipe, buy the latter form, which is off-white in colour. Chana dal is a small sibling of the chickpea that has been split and husked. Both forms of dal are readily available at Indian markets and online.

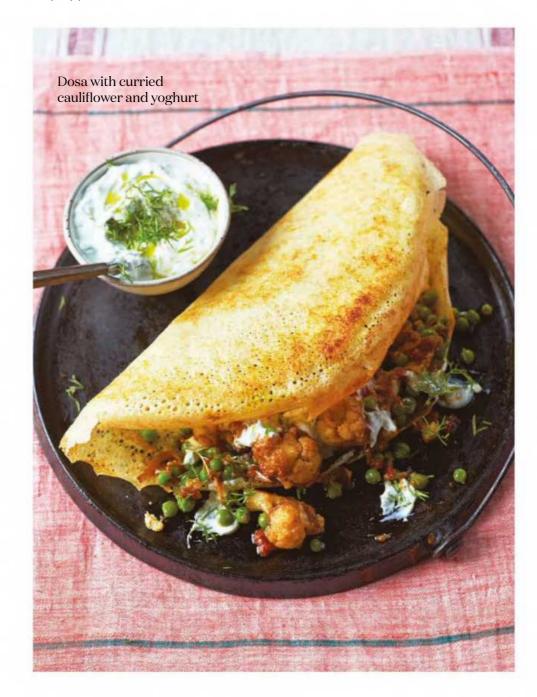
Cime di rapa morning buns

"If you've never heard of a morning bun, your first order of business should be popping over to San Francisco and heading to Tartine Bakery," Bloomfield says. "Behind the glass of the display case, you'll spot spiral-shaped little pillows that have been baked with orange-cinnamon sugar, the centre of each one rising up like a hill. That is, if you haven't arrived too late. They're magic, really - buttery layers of dough that are somehow both rich and delicate, crackly on the outsides and soft in the middle. Whenever I cook them. they get me thinking. As a cook obsessed with Italian food, the orange element brings to mind rosemary (the two often join forces in Sicily), which brings to mind all sorts of savoury, Italianesque options, like this version laced with pesto made from pleasantly bitter raab and musty, sharp aged provolone." Start this recipe a day ahead to make the dough.

Makes 12 (pictured p140)

- 275 ml full-cream milk, gently heated just until warm to the touch, plus 2 tbsp as needed
 - 3 tsp dry yeast

- 500 gm plain flour
 - 2 tbsp white sugar A glug of neutral oil, such as rapeseed Butter blob
- 450 gm cold unsalted butter, cut into about 1cm slices
 - 2 tbsp plain flour Pesto filling
- 350 gm lightly packed roughly chopped cime di rapa (stalks that are 5mm or thinner, leaves and florets; about 1½ bunches)
 - 3 medium garlic cloves, roughly chopped
- 125 gm aged provolone, roughly chopped
- 3 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 tsp crumbled dried pequín chillies (see note) or pinches of red pepper flakes
- 1 For the dough, combine 220ml of the warm milk and the yeast in a small mixing bowl and stir with a wooden spoon until the yeast has mostly dissolved. Let the mixture sit until the surface bubbles (about 5 minutes). In the bowl of a stand>



mixer fitted with a dough hook, stir together the flour, sugar and 2 tsp salt. Add the yeast-milk mixture, then swish the remaining 55ml of warm milk in the small bowl to get at any yeast left behind and pour it into the bowl of the stand mixer. Mix on low speed for 2 minutes. If there's still loose flour visible after the dough forms, gradually add up to 2 tbsp more warm milk until all the flour is incorporated. Increase the speed to medium-low (if your mixer is struggling a bit, take out the dough, cut it in half and work a piece at a time) until the dough is smooth and slightly tacky (3-4 minutes). Add a glug of oil to a bowl large enough to hold at least twice the amount of dough, then wipe the bowl with paper towels to coat it with a thin layer of the oil. Add the dough, cover the bowl tightly with plastic wrap and leave it at room temperature until it has increased in size 11/2-2 times (30 minutes to 1 hour). Refrigerate overnight.

2 For the butter blob, wash the bowl of the stand mixer and fit the mixer with the paddle attachment. Combine the butter and flour in the

bowl. Mix at low speed for 10 seconds or so, then at medium speed until the butter and flour are well combined and there are no lumps, but not so long that the butter is no longer cold (about 1 minute). Transfer the blob to a clean surface or sheet of baking paper and work swiftly to shape it into a 17cm x 15cm rectangle. Wrap it in plastic wrap and pop it in the fridge until it's well chilled (at least 8 hours or preferably overnight).

3 For the morning bun dough, sit the butter blob at room temperature for 1-2 minutes just to take the chill off. Do not let it get warm. Put the yeast dough on a clean, lightly floured surface and use a heavy rolling pin to roll it into a rough 40cm x 20cm rectangle. Position the dough so a long side faces you. Put the butter blob in the centre of the dough so its slightly shorter side faces you. Fold one of the dough's short sides over the butter so it just covers half of the butter. Fold the opposite side so it covers the other half of the butter. Gently pinch together the dough edges at the centre to seal in the butter.

4 Roll from short end to short end, flipping over the dough once and dusting it and the work surface with flour so it won't stick to the pin or surface, until you have an even rectangle that's about 55cm x 22cm. (To achieve the 23cm width, you might have to rotate the dough 90 degrees and roll briefly.) Fold the dough into thirds as though it were a letter, gently wiping away the excess flour on the top and bottom of the dough as you do. Start by folding one of the short sides to create a 38cm x 22cm rectangle, then fold the other short side to create a 20cm x 22cm rectangle. Wrap the dough in plastic wrap and refrigerate for 1 hour. You're going to repeat this process three more times, so each time, scribble down the number to keep track of how many you've completed. Wait a few minutes until the chill comes off the dough so it's easier to roll, but don't let it get warm. Position the dough so the rounded side faces your left, then gently roll the dough into an even rectangle that's about 55cm x 22cm. For the second time, fold the dough into thirds as though it were a letter. Wrap the dough in plastic wrap and refrigerate for 1 hour. Repeat the process - rolling, folding and refrigerating – twice more.

5 Meanwhile, for the pesto filling, working in batches if necessary, combine the cime di rapa and garlic in a food processor and pulse, stirring occasionally, until the cime di rapa is finely chopped and there are no large pieces of garlic. Transfer the mixture to a mixing bowl. Add the provolone to the processor and pulse until it's in small chunks, then transfer it to the bowl. Add the oil, chillies and 1 tbsp sea salt, and stir well.

6 Roll the dough out to an even 45cm x 30cm rectangle. Spread the pesto evenly onto the dough, leaving a 1cm border on all sides. Roll up the dough to form a tight 45cm long log. Run wet fingers along the seam, then turn the log seam-side down and press down gently so the seam adheres. Cut the log crosswise into 12 x 4cm-thick pieces. Put the slices into the cups of 12 x 1-cup muffin tins and lightly press down so they touch the bottoms of the cups. Cover them loosely with plastic wrap (or even better, use an overturned clean plastic tub to avoid the risk of the plastic wrap sticking after the dough rises) and keep them in a warm place until the dough rises a bit above the rim (about 1 hour).

7 Meanwhile, position a rack in the centre of the oven and preheat to 240C. Bake the buns on the rack (if both muffin tins can't fit on the centre rack, bake them in a couple of batches) with a tray underneath until they're croissant-golden-brown and crisp (12-18 minutes). Carefully prise them out of the muffin tins and allow them to cool slightly on a wire rack.

Note Pequín chillies are available from fireworksfoods com au



Tagliatelle with asparagus and parmesan fonduta

"This entire dish is right out of Rose and Ruthie's River Café playbook, with just a few tweaks of my own," says Bloomfield. "They taught me how to make fonduta, a silky sauce rich with crème fraîche and egg yolks. It takes less time and just a bit more effort than tomato sauce, and turns a plate of pasta into an elegant and impressive meal. Get yourself some asparagus spears that are as thick as your index finger – not those thin or sprouty ones – and you'll enjoy the juicy slivers in each bite."

Serves 4 as a main

- 2 large egg yolks
- 350 mg crème fraîche
- 150 gm parmesan, finely grated, plus extra for finishing
 - 1 medium garlic clove, finely grated
- 450 gm asparagus, woody bottoms snapped off, stalks cut on the diagonal into long 1cm-thick pieces, tips left whole

Fresh egg pasta

Makes about 360gm

- 90 gm "00" fine semolina flour, plus extra for dusting
- 90 gm "00" flour, plus extra for dusting
- ½ lightly beaten egg
- 6 large egg yolks
- 1 For pasta, combine the flours and a pinch of flaky sea salt in a large bowl and stir well. Pour the mixture onto a clean work surface, make it into a mound, and use a spoon or your fingers to carve out a well in the centre big enough to hold the whole egg and egg yolks. Add the egg and yolks to the well. Use a fork, holding the tines parallel to your work surface, to break the yolks and stir the egg in a circular motion. As you stir, you'll see flour from the walls of your well tumbling into the egg. Keep stirring, gradually incorporating the flour into the egg and occasionally gathering the border of flour closer to the slowly expanding bright yellow centre. After 4 minutes or so, you should have a very wet dough surrounded by flour. Now use your hands or a dough scraper to slowly incorporate the rest of the flour, folding and pressing until it's all incorporated. Cut the dough in half. Knead one piece at a time, keeping the other wrapped in plastic wrap. Press firmly down and forward with your palm (one hand on top of the other for force), then fold the dough back onto itself, pushing down and forward again, and turning the dough and doing it all over. Keep at it until the dough is smooth (5-7 minutes). Kneading will prove more challenging as you work the gluten, so you might occasionally switch to the other piece of dough, wrapping the one you're not kneading in plastic wrap and letting it relax a bit. Wrap each half in plastic wrap and let them rest for at least 20 minutes or up to 1 hour. 2 Cut each piece of dough in half, rolling out one
- and keeping the other pieces you aren't working with wrapped in plastic wrap. (As you get more comfortable with the process, you might not need to halve them.) Work with one piece of dough at a time. Form the dough into a rough rectangle that's about 10cm x 15cm. Set the rollers to the



widest setting and feed the dough through twice. (If the dough feels at all sticky or doesn't come cleanly from the machine, dust it with a little flour.) Set the rollers to their second-widest setting and feed the dough through once. Continue in this manner until the dough has been through each setting once. This process works the gluten in the dough, giving the pasta a lovely texture. At this point, it's fine if the long sheet of dough looks ragged or uneven. Fold the sheet of pasta onto itself several times to form a rough rectangle (about 12cm x 20cm) and press firmly with your hands so the layers stick together. Set the rollers to the widest setting again. Feed the dough through once at each setting until you reach about halfway to the narrowest one. Then start feeding the dough through twice at each setting, continuing towards the narrowest one, until your dough is about 15cm x 90cm and about 2mm thick. Cover the dough with a damp towel and repeat with the remaining dough. For tagliatelle, cut the long sheets crosswise into smaller, shorter sections to the length you prefer your pasta. I like my tagliatelle to be 30cm-40cm long. Dust each side with semolina, giving the dough a light rub, and stack the sheets neatly. Cut the stack lengthways into 1cm-wide slices. Gently toss the slices, separating them into individual noodles as you do.

3 Bring a large saucepan of water to the boil. Meanwhile, bring a couple of centimetres of water

to the boil in a small saucepan. Whisk together the egg yolks, crème fraîche, parmesan, and garlic in a large heatproof bowl that will fit snugly on the pan without touching the boiling water.

- **4** Set the bowl on the small pan and whisk the egg mixture constantly, occasionally scraping the sides and removing the bowl from the pan every couple of minutes as you whisk to keep the cooking nice and slow (don't let it bubble). The mixture will look thick and clumpy for a few seconds, then become liquidy, and then, once the cheese has melted, silky smooth. Cook just until the liquidy sauce has thickened slightly (it should thinly coat the back of a spoon; 6-8 minutes). Set the bowl aside in a warm place.
- **5** Salt the large saucepan of boiling water generously until it tastes slightly less salty than the sea. If you're confident the pasta and asparagus will finish cooking at the same time, add them both to the water. If you're a worrywart, cook the asparagus first, scoop it into a colander to drain, then cook the pasta. Cook the asparagus until it is juicy with a slight bite (3-4 minutes) and cook the pasta for 3-4 minutes.
- 6 Drain the pasta and asparagus well in a colander, then pop them back into the now-empty pan. Pour in most of the fonduta and toss gently but thoroughly. Season to taste with sea salt and more fonduta, if you'd like. Transfer to bowls, top with a little more parmesan, and eat straightaway.>

Butternut squash-coconut tart

"My first Thanksgiving, when I had my first taste of pumpkin pie, was fairly typical - you know, just me sitting at a long table with Mario Batali and his family," says Bloomfield. "I was fresh off the boat from London, just after I became the chef of The Spotted Pig. I didn't know anyone in New York and Mario was kind enough to invite me to share his holiday meal. I remember being quite nervous, because I'd made a pumpkin caponata (a sort of sweet-sour savoury relish typically made from eggplant) and I hoped Mario would like it. Someone had brought a pumpkin pie, which I had assumed, being from the land of meat pies, would be a savoury dish as well. I was surprised when it came out for dessert. Yet I adored it. Pumpkin - as well as winter squashes like butternut – is one of those vegetables that's as at home during dinner as it is after. So long as there's not too much spice getting in the way of the earthy, melony squash flavour, I'm a big fan. This is my favourite version, with a sneaky bit of coconut milk providing richness and a compelling something special that your mates will love, even if they can't quite identify the source. A good dollop of whipped cream and a sprinkle of toasted coconut flakes make a nice topping." The recipe makes more filling than you'll need, so you can reserve a little pastry and make a mini pie.

Makes one 25cm tart

- 1.3 kg butternut pumpkin, peeled and cut into 2.5cm cubes
- 335 ml canned unsweetened coconut milk, well stirred
- 225 gm caster sugar
- 1/8 tsp ground cinnamon
- 5 large eggs plus 1 egg yolk Whipped cream and toasted coconut, to serve

For the tart shell

- 280 gm plain flour
- 90 gm pure icing sugar
- 150 gm cold unsalted butter, cut into 5mm pieces
 - 3 large egg yolks, lightly beaten
- 1 For the tart shell, sift the flour into a food processor, then add the icing sugar, butter and 1/4 tsp sea salt. Pulse the mixture until it looks like fine breadcrumbs. Add the egg yolks and pulse until a crumbly dough forms. Scrape the dough out onto a work surface and lightly knead just until smooth. Form the dough into a ball, wrap it in plastic wrap and refrigerate it for at least 1 hour or up to 2 days.
- 2 Position a rack in the centre of the oven and preheat to 180C. Cut the chilled dough into 2 or 3 large pieces and grate it through the large holes of a box grater. Use your fingers to press the dough onto the bottom and up the sides of a heavy 25cm fluted pie dish (about 7cm deep) or tart tin to create an even layer about 5mm thick on the sides and 8mm thick on the bottom. Work swiftly - you don't want the dough to warm up too much. Gently prick the bottom here and there with a fork, which will prevent it from puffing up as it bakes, then pop the dish into the freezer for 15 minutes. Blind-bake the tart shell (see cook's notes p200) just until the rim begins to turn light

golden brown (about 15 minutes). Carefully remove the paper and rice or beans. Let the shell cool while you make the filling. Keep the oven on.

- **3** For the filling, put the pumpkin in a heavy enamelled baking dish in a single layer, cover the dish tightly with foil and bake, stirring once and recovering tightly with foil, until the squash is very soft (about 55 minutes). Leave the oven on. Transfer the squash to a blender. Add the coconut milk and purée until very smooth. With the blender running on low, add the sugar, cinnamon and, one at a time, the eggs and the egg yolk. Keep the blender running just until the eggs are fully incorporated into the mixture.
- 4 Put the tart shell on a baking sheet. Pour the pumpkin mixture into the tart shell to about 1cm from the rim, reserving the rest for the mini pie. Bake, rotating the dish once, until the crust is golden brown and the filling has just set (45 minutes to 1 hour). After about 30 minutes,

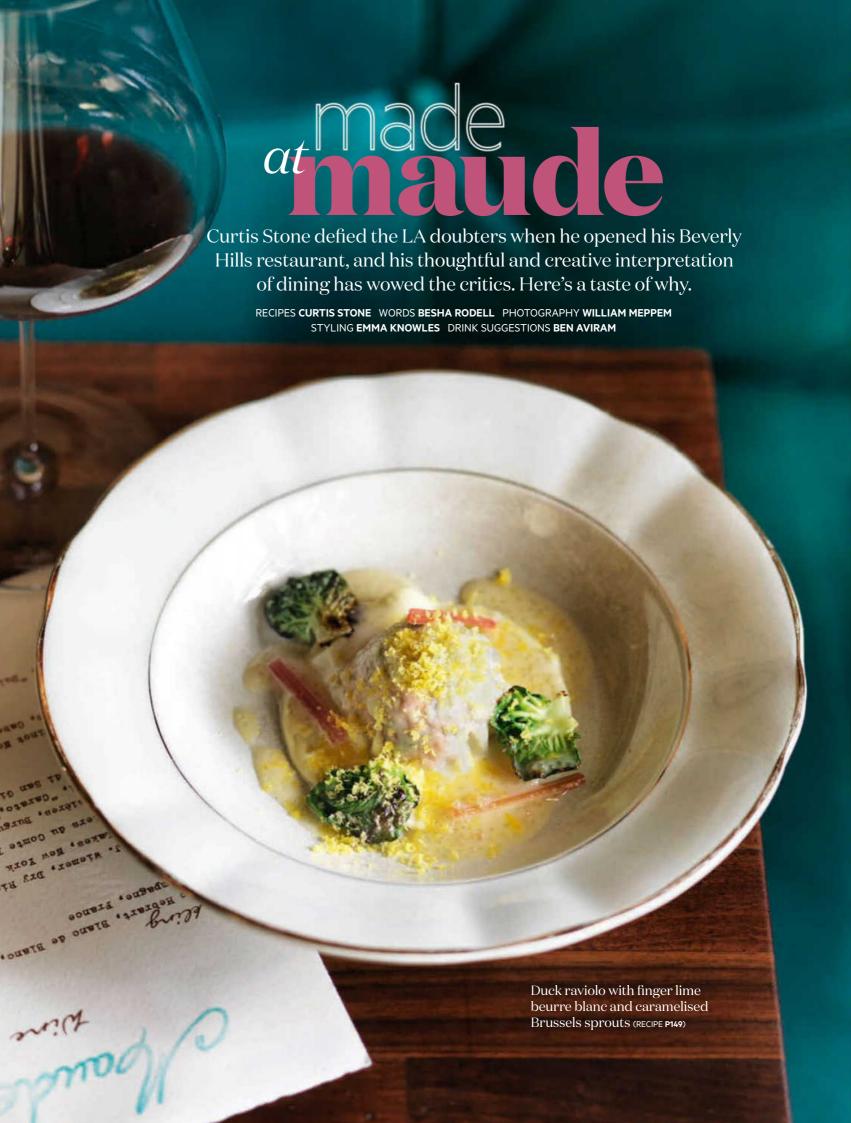
take a peek at the exposed crust. If it already looks light golden brown, carefully cover the exposed crust with foil for the rest of the baking time. Remove the pan from the oven and let the tart cool to room temperature before slicing. It keeps covered in the fridge for up to a day or two.

+ A Girl and Her Greens (\$49.99, hbk) by April Bloomberg is published by Allen & Unwin. The recipes and text have been reproduced with minor GT style changes.













hen Curtis Stone announced he was opening a restaurant in Beverly Hills, scepticism ran high. In the US, Stone commands a slightly lower profile than the celebrity he enjoys in Australia, but his smiling good looks and multiple reality-television appearances make him a known commodity. But could he actually cook? No one knew, and to many it seemed unlikely.

What a surprise, then, to discover that his restaurant Maude (named for Stone's nan) was as serious as they come. Opened in early 2014 with a tiny dining room and a tasting menu built monthly around one seasonal ingredient, Maude quickly revealed Stone to be a thoughtful, creative and talented chef. Critics swooned. Maude landed on the James Beard semi-finalist list for Best New Restaurant in the country. There's a strong consensus that Stone delivers one of Los Angeles' most thrilling dining experiences.

With his level of fame, Stone could easily have slapped his name on a casino restaurant in Las Vegas or Melbourne, sat back and reaped the rewards. So why do something so intimate, and so labour intensive? "I ask myself the same thing," he says, only somewhat jokingly, before launching into a philosophical musing on all that food had given him – fame, travel, money – and realising at a certain point that he wasn't doing what he originally set out to do, which was cook the best food possible in a tiny, personal restaurant. "I missed having that creative outlet," Stone says.

Fatherhood has also changed his outlook. "I've become a dad, and I look at my little boy and I think, 'God, what are you going to think of me one day? Are you going to think I just got lucky and got a TV show?" He talks about growing up with a single mum, and how much he admired her work ethic. "There's something about getting back to my roots and cleaning the stove at the end of the night."

He's enjoyed his return to cooking so much, he's doubling down on the restaurant game. Stone and his brother, Luke, have partnered with chef Chad Colby, who recently left the critically acclaimed Chi Spacca, and the three of them hope to open an as-yet-unnamed (but likely meat-centric) restaurant in Hollywood some time next year.

Would he ever consider opening a restaurant in Australia? "I'd love to," he says, "but I never wanted to be one of those guys with my name on 10 doors. It's never appealed to me. If I ever did open a restaurant in Australia, it'd probably be because I'd be moving back there." *Maude*, 212 S Beverly Dr, Beverly Hills, Los Angeles, mauderestaurant.com

Oysters with Champagne and caviar

"Oysters, caviar, Champagne – a trio of equally luxurious ingredients, and served together, they signal the start of an extra-special occasion," says Stone. "Yuzu is a tart Asian citrus fruit that is best fresh, but if you can't find it, yuzu juice from an Asian grocer will do the trick."

Prep time 10 mins, cook 1 min (plus setting)

Serves 8 as an entrée

24 oysters, shucked, shells reserved Crushed ice, to serve

- 60 gm caviar (Maude uses oscietra)
 - 1 tbsp yuzu juice Champagne gelée
 - 1 tbsp lemon juice
- 1½ silver-strength gelatine leaves, softened in cold water for 5 minutes
- 180 ml rosé Champagne
- 1 For Champagne gelée, warm lemon juice in a small saucepan over low-medium heat, remove from heat, squeeze excess water from gelatine, add to pan and whisk to dissolve. Transfer to a bowl, stir

in Champagne, then pour into a shallow container and refrigerate until set (1½-2 hours). Using a fork, gently scrape to break up the gelée.

2 Arrange oysters in the half-shell on a platter of crushed ice, top each with a little caviar and Champagne gelée, garnish with a couple drops of yuzu juice and serve.

Wine suggestion H Goutorbe Cuvée Prestige NV, Champagne, France.

Gougères with Jerusalem artichoke purée

"Gougères are classic French savoury pastries so delicate and light they'll fly straight off the baking tray in a fan-forced oven," says Curtis Stone. "Turn the fan off for this recipe. And pipe a bit of the gougère pastry around the corners of the baking tray to hold the baking paper in place. If you're stuck for time, the gougères are delicious on their own without a filling."

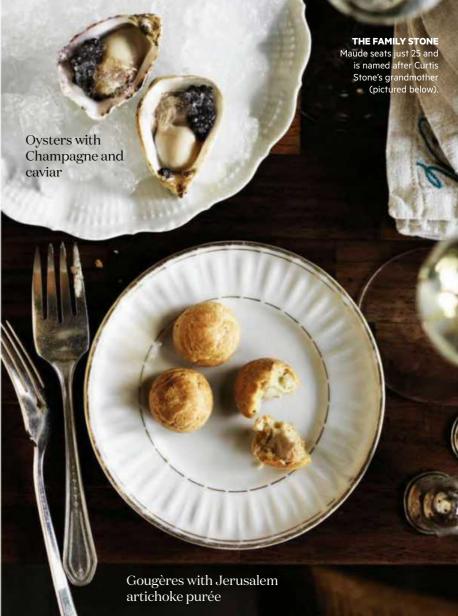
Prep time 35 mins, cook 30 mins

Serves 8 as a snack

- 40 gm unsalted butter, diced
- 65 gm plain flour, sifted
- 2 large eggs, at room temperature
- 55 gm aged Gruyère, finely grated

 Jerusalem artichoke purée
- 20 gm unsalted butter
- 270 gm Jerusalem artichokes, peeled, thinly sliced on a mandolin
 - 1 small golden shallot, thinly sliced
 - 1 thyme sprig
- 120 ml thickened cream
- 2 tsp lemon juice, or to taste
- 1 Preheat oven to 200C. Place racks in the top third and centre of oven and line a large baking tray with baking paper (see tip above). Bring butter, 80ml water and 11/3 tsp each sea salt and freshly ground black pepper to the boil in a saucepan over medium-high heat, add flour, reduce heat to low and stir until mixture forms a ball. Stir continuously until the flour taste cooks out (1-2 minutes), place in an electric mixer fitted with a paddle and beat until cooled to room temperature (2-3 minutes). Beat in eggs, one at a time, beating well and scraping down sides of bowl between additions. Beat in cheese to just combine, then transfer to a piping bag fitted with a 1cm plain nozzle and pipe 2.5cm rounds onto prepared tray, leaving about 3cm between each (at this stage, the gougères can be frozen for up to a week; bring to room temperature before baking). Bake, rearranging gougères and turning tray occasionally, until evenly puffed and golden-brown (15-20 minutes). Reduce oven to 50C and keep gougères warm.
- 2 Meanwhile, for Jerusalem artichoke purée, heat butter in a large frying pan over medium-high heat until foaming, add artichokes, shallot and thyme, and sauté until artichokes are golden and almost tender (6-8 minutes). Add cream, reduce heat to low-medium and simmer until cream has reduced, and artichokes are tender (3-4 minutes). Blend in a blender with lemon juice until smooth and season to taste. Place in a piping bag fitted with a 3mm nozzle and cool to room temperature.>





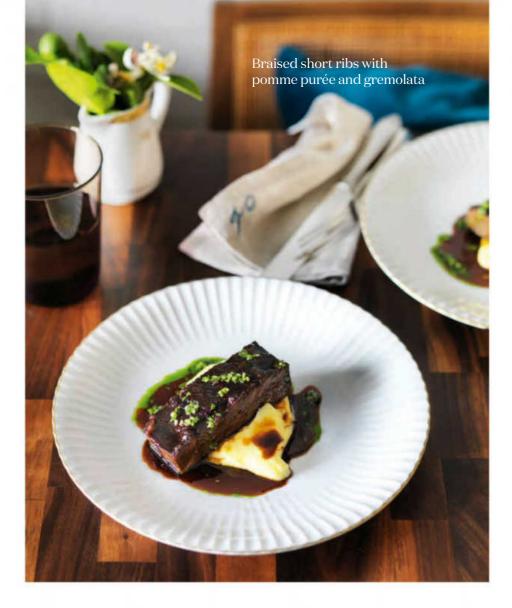
MAUDE MENU

- + Oysters with Champagne and caviar
- + Gougères with Jerusalem artichoke purée
- + Braised short ribs with pomme purée and gremolata
 - + Roast duck with orange, bay, juniper and red wine
 - + Carrot-beetroot salad
- + Duck raviolo with finger lime beurre blanc and caramelised Brussels sprouts
- + Ricotta fritters with lime curd and candied grapefruit
- + Dulcey crémeux with hemp seeds and crème fraîche yuzu sorbet

"At Maude, we put locally sourced ingredients under a microscope and experiment to see how many ways we can *make something taste delicious.*"







3 Pierce a hole in the base of each gougère with a small sharp knife, pipe in a little purée and serve warm.

Wine suggestion H Goutorbe Cuvée Prestige NV, Champagne, France.

Braised short ribs with pomme purée and gremolata

"Decadent and rich, slow-cooked ribs make me a happy man," says Stone. "Short ribs are naturally a tough piece of meat, which isn't a negative thing. It means they have loads of flavour and, after gently braising, the meat can be broken up with the back of a fork. Gremolata is a herb condiment classically made with parsley, lemon zest and garlic, and gives this dish a grassy-zesty lift."

Prep time 40 mins, cook 31/2 hrs Serves 8

- 2 tsp yellow mustard seeds
- tsp each black peppercorns, coriander seeds and juniper berries
- 3 black cardamom pods
- 3 whole cloves
- 2 star anise
- 8 boneless beef short ribs (about 150gm each)
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 50 gm caster sugar
- 120 ml dry red wine
- 360 ml beef stock
- 10 thyme sprigs

Pomme purée

- 750 gm chat potatoes
- 200 gm unsalted butter, diced, chilled
- ml (1 cup) hot milk

Gremolata

- 60 gm flat-leaf parsley (about 3 bunches)
- 185 ml (¾ cup) olive oil
- 1½ tbsp finely chopped lemon rind
- 1½ tsp lemon juice
- 1½ tsp finely chopped garlic
- 1 Preheat oven to 140C. Dry-roast spices in a small frying pan over medium-high heat until fragrant (2-3 minutes; see cook's notes p200), and transfer to a bowl. Dry short ribs well with paper towels and season to taste. Heat a large casserole over medium-high heat until hot, add 2 tsp olive oil and half the ribs, then cook, turning once, until ribs are heavily caramelised (5-6 minutes). Set aside and repeat with remaining oil and ribs.
- 2 Wipe out casserole with paper towels, add sugar and cook without stirring until dark caramel (1-2 minutes). Add wine (be careful, hot caramel will spit), stir to combine and simmer until reduced by half (1-2 minutes). Add stock and toasted spices, bring to the boil, return ribs to casserole, cover and braise in oven, turning ribs every 45 minutes, until very tender (3-31/4 hours). Cool ribs slightly in braising liquid, then remove and set aside in a warm place.
- 3 Strain braising liquid into a saucepan and set aside until fat settles on the surface. Skim off fat

and simmer braising liquid over medium-high heat until reduced by two-thirds (15-20 minutes), then strain through a sieve lined with muslin and

- **4** Meanwhile, for pomme purée, bring potatoes to the boil in a large saucepan of salted water (to cover by 4cm) over medium-high heat, then reduce heat to medium and simmer until tender but not bursting apart (20-25 minutes). Drain and peel while hot, then pass through a moulis or press through a ricer or sieve into a clean pan. Stir potato over medium heat to dry out (1-2 minutes), then add butter in batches, beating well between additions, then press through a fine sieve and return to pan. Add milk in 4 stages, beating well between additions, season generously to taste with sea salt (about 3 tsp) and keep warm.
- **5** For gremolata, blanch three-quarters of the parsley until bright green (30 seconds; see cook's notes p200), then drain and refresh. Drain again, squeeze out excess water, then process in a blender on high speed with oil until very smooth and vibrant green (8-10 minutes). Strain through a fine sieve and refrigerate until required. Parsley oil can be made 3 days ahead. Just before serving, finely chop remaining parsley, and add to parsley oil with lemon rind and juice, garlic and 1 tsp sea
- **6** Divide the pomme purée among serving plates, and top with a short rib, a little sauce and gremolata and serve.

Wine suggestion 2009 Emilio Moro, Ribera del Duero, Spain.

Carrot-beetroot salad

"At Maude, we put locally sourced, seasonal ingredients under a microscope and experiment to see how many ways we can make something taste delicious," says Stone. "We serve it raw, dehydrate it, grind it, purée it, turn it into a sorbet. In this salad, you'll enjoy pickled beetroot and blood orange chips, plus chewy cooked carrots and fresh carrots that are shaved paper-thin. The salad tastes as bold and vibrant as it looks." Start this recipe a day ahead to pickle the beetroot and make the orange chips.

Prep time 1 hr, cook 9 hrs (plus freezing, pickling, cooling)

Serves 8

- 3 baby carrots, trimmed, peeled and thinly shaved lengthways on a mandolin
- ½ cup (loosely packed) lamb's lettuce
- 2 tsp extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 tsp lemon juice Blood orange oil, to serve (optional; see note)

Blood orange chips

- 2 blood oranges
- 55 gm (¼ cup) caster sugar Pickled beetroot
- 1 beetroot scrubbed
- 1 tsp olive oil
- 125 ml (½ cup) Champagne vinegar
- 100 gm caster sugar
 - 5 thyme sprigs

 - 1 piece thinly peeled lemon rind

Roast carrots

- 1.5 litres (6 cups) fresh carrot juice
- 2 thyme sprigs
- 1 tarragon sprig
- 400 gm (about 24) baby heirloom carrots, scrubbed and trimmed
 - 1 tbsp olive oil Charred baby leeks
 - 8 baby leeks, green tops trimmed Olive oil spray

Crimson turnip cream

- 270 gm (about 8) baby crimson turnips (see note), trimmed and sliced into 2mm-thick discs
- 60 ml (1/4 cup) thickened cream
- 30 gm butter, coarsely chopped
- 1 tsp lemon juice, or to taste
- 1 For blood orange chips, slice tops off oranges and freeze until firm, but not frozen solid (2-2½ hours). Meanwhile, bring sugar and 60ml water to the simmer in a small saucepan over medium heat, whisking to dissolve sugar, then cool to room temperature. Preheat oven to 75C and line an oven tray with baking paper. Thinly slice oranges on a mandolin, place on tray, brush both sides with sugar syrup and dry in oven until crisp (4½-5 hours; see note). Store in an airtight container until required. Blood orange crisps can be made up to 2 days ahead.
- **2** For pickled beetroot, preheat oven to 200C. Place beetroot in the centre of a 25cm-square piece of foil, drizzle with oil, season to taste and wrap tightly to enclose. Roast until just tender when pierced with a skewer (45-50 minutes), cool slightly, then peel, finely dice and transfer to a non-reactive container (see cook's notes p200). Meanwhile, stir remaining ingredients and 120ml water in a small saucepan over medium-high heat until sugar dissolves, cool to room temperature, then pour over beetroot, cover and refrigerate to pickle (at least 6 hours or overnight).
- **3** For roast carrots, preheat oven to 75C and line an oven tray with baking paper. Bring carrot juice and herbs to the simmer in a large saucepan over medium-high heat, add carrots and simmer until just tender (5-6 minutes). Drain, toss with olive oil in a bowl, season to taste, then spread on prepared tray and roast until chewy and slightly shrunken (2½-3 hours). Keep warm.
- 4 Meanwhile, for charred leeks, blanch leeks until tender (2-3 minutes; see cook's notes p200), drain and refresh, then drain well and pat dry with paper towels. Line a cast-iron frying pan with foil and spray with olive oil spray. Place leeks on foil, then cook over high heat, turning leeks occasionally, until well charred all over (7-8 minutes). Halve leeks lengthways and keep warm.
- **5** For crimson turnip cream, bring turnips, cream, butter, 60ml water and ½ tsp salt to the boil in a saucepan over medium-high heat, then reduce heat to medium and simmer until turnips are tender (8-10 minutes). Strain, reserving liquid, then purée turnips in a blender with lemon juice and 1 tbsp reserved liquid. Adjust seasoning to taste with salt and lemon juice, cool then transfer to a squeeze bottle.

6 Dress shaved carrot and lamb's lettuce with extra-virgin olive oil and lemon juice, and season to taste with salt. Dot crimson turnip cream and orange oil on plates, divide roast carrot and charred leek among plates, garnish with lamb's lettuce and shaved carrot, and orange chips, and serve.

Note Blood orange oil is available from select health-food shops. The blood orange chips can also be made using a dehydrator. If baby crimson turnips are unavailable, substitute baby turnips. **Wine suggestion** 2012 Skouras, Moscofilero, Peloponnese, Greece.

Duck raviolo with finger lime beurre blanc and caramelised Brussels sprouts

"A fresh-pasta dish has featured on each of the monthly menus at Maude since its inception," says Stone. "This fat raviolo of duck mousse and rainbow chard, laced with pickled chard stem and a dusting of grated duck egg yolk is my favourite to date." Start this recipe six days ahead to make the salt-cured yolks and pickle.

Prep time 1½ hrs, cook 35 mins (plus curing,

drying, resting)

Makes 8 (pictured p144)

- 8 large Brussels sprouts, green outer leaves only
- 1 tbsp olive oil

Salt-cured duck egg yolks

- 800 gm sea salt flakes or rock salt
 - 4 duck egg yolks (see note)
 Pickled silverbeet stem
 - 1 rainbow silverbeet stem, cut into 4cm pieces
- 60 ml (1/4 cup) Champagne vinegar
- 50 gm caster sugar
- 2 thyme sprigs
- 1 clove
- 1 piece thinly peeled lemon rind Braised rainbow silverbeet
- 2 tsp olive oil
- ½ golden shallot, finely chopped
- ½ bunch rainbow silverbeet, leaves only
- 30 ml dry white wine
- 60 ml (1/4 cup) chicken stock
- 10 gm butter, diced
- 3 duck breasts, skin and sinew removed, coarsely minced (see note)
- 1 duck egg yolk (see note)
- 180 ml (3/4 cup) thickened cream>





Pasta dough

- 250 gm (1½ cups) "00" flour, plus extra
 - 3 large egg yolks
 - 2 large eggs
 - 1 tsp olive oil

Finger lime beurre blanc

- 125 ml (½ cup) Champagne vinegar
- 125 ml (½ cup) mandarin juice
- 125 ml (½ cup) dry white wine
 - 2 thyme sprigs
 - 1 tarragon sprig
- ½ tsp whole black peppercorns
- 225 gm chilled unsalted butter, diced
- 1½ tbsp finger lime pearls (from about 8 finger limes)
- 1 For salt-cured duck egg yolks, spread half the salt evenly in a 23cm-square baking dish and make four indentations with the back of a spoon. Carefully place a yolk in each indentation, ensuring they stay intact, cover carefully with remaining salt, then cover dish with plastic wrap and refrigerate for 5 days to cure. Preheat oven to 75C and line a small oven tray with baking paper. Carefully remove yolks from salt, rinse under cold running water to remove any white spots and place on prepared tray, then dry yolks in oven (9-10 hours, or in a dehydrator at 65C for about 12 hours) and refrigerate in an airtight container until required.
- **2** For pickled silverbeet stem, place stem in a heatproof bowl. Stir remaining ingredients and 60ml water in a saucepan over medium-high heat to dissolve sugar, bring to the boil, pour over silverbeet stem, cool and refrigerate for 1 hour to pickle. Pickled stem will keep for 3 days.
- **3** For braised silverbeet, heat oil in a large frying pan over medium-high heat. Add shallot and sauté until translucent (1-1½ minutes), then add silverbeet and stir to wilt (1-2 minutes). Add wine, reduce by half, then add stock and butter, season to taste and simmer until silverbeet is tender (3-4 minutes). Transfer to a tray with a slotted spoon to cool, squeeze excess moisture from leaves, then coarsely chop and set aside.
- **4** For duck mousse, process duck, egg yolk, 2 tsp fine salt and ½ tsp freshly ground black pepper in a food processor until mixture starts to form a ball. With machine running, drizzle in cream until emulsified. Pass through a fine sieve, then fold in ¾ cup braised silverbeet leaves. To test seasoning wrap a teaspoonful of duck mousse in plastic wrap and poaching in simmering water for 1-2 minutes, taste and adjust seasoning as needed. Place mixture in a piping bag (without a nozzle fitted) and refrigerate. Filling can be made a day ahead.
- **5** For pasta dough, place flour in a large bowl and form a well in the centre. Add egg yolks, eggs, olive oil and ½ tsp fine sea salt into well, then whisk with a fork to combine. Gradually mix in flour to form a shaggy dough (avoid incorporating any hardened bits of flour). Transfer to a lightly floured bench and knead until smooth. Divide in half, wrap each piece in plastic wrap and refrigerate to rest (1 hour).
- **6** Working with a piece of pasta dough at a time, pass through the widest setting of a pasta

machine, dusting with flour as needed to prevent sticking. Fold into thirds and repeat rolling and folding 4 four times, then continue rolling and folding, reducing settings notch by notch until dough is 1mm thick. Cut crossways into two pieces, one slightly longer than the other. Place a 5cm cutter on the shorter pasta sheet (do not cut through), then spoon 40gm duck mousse filling into the cutter, then remove cutter. Repeat 3 more times at 12cm intervals. Lightly brush with water around each filling, then top with longer pasta sheet, pressing closely around filling to seal. Cut out ravioli using a 9cm cutter, then place in a single layer on a tray lined with baking paper and dusted with flour, and cover loosely with plastic wrap. Repeat with remaining pasta and filling to make 8 ravioli and refrigerate until required.

- **7** Blanch Brussels sprout leaves until bright green (30 seconds), refresh in iced water, drain well and set aside.
- **8** For finger lime beurre blanc, boil vinegar, juice, wine, thyme, tarragon and peppercorns in a saucepan over medium heat and reduce to 2 tbsp (12-15 minutes). Whisk in butter, a cube at a time, beating well to emulsify between additions and thinning with a little hot water if necessary. Strain through a fine sieve, stir in finger lime, season to taste, keep warm.
- **9** Cook ravioli in a large saucepan of boiling salted water until cooked through and al dente (4 minutes), then remove with a slotted spoon,

blot off excess water with paper towels and place in warmed serving bowls. Meanwhile, heat oil in a large frying pan over medium-high heat until hot, add Brussels sprouts leaves and fry until crisp (30 seconds each side), drain briefly on paper towels and season lightly with salt. Spoon a little beurre blanc over each raviolo, scatter with pickled chard stem and Brussels sprout leaves, finely grate cured duck egg over the top and serve.

Note Duck eggs are available from Asian grocers. Ask your butcher to mince the duck breasts for you; otherwise, finely chop them by hand. **Wine suggestion** Catherine & Pierre Breton "Les Perrières", Bourgueil, France.

Ricotta fritters with lime curd and candied grapefruit

"There's something so satisfying about making ricotta and it's even more rewarding to put it to delicious use," says Stone. "Whisk it into these crisp-on-the-outside, tender-on-the-inside fritters and share with a group of fortunate friends."

Prep time 20 mins, cook 15 mins (plus draining)

Serves 8

Canola oil, for deep-frying

- 110 gm (¾ cup) plain flour, sieved
- 2½ tbsp pure icing sugar
- 1½ tsp baking powder
- 2 eggs>



- 125 ml (½ cup) milk
- 1½ tsp finely grated orange rind Caster sugar, for rolling

Candied grapefruit peel

Julienned peel and juice of 1 ruby grapefruit

- 110 gm (½ cup) caster sugar
 - Lime curd
- 2 eggs
- 80 gm (1/3 cup) caster sugar
- 80 ml ($\frac{1}{3}$ cup) lime juice (from about 3 limes)
- 70 gm unsalted butter, diced, at room temperature

Ricotta

- 750 ml (3 cups) milk
- 185 ml (¾ cup) thickened cream
- 25 ml lemon juice
- 1 For candied grapefruit peel, blanch rind for 20 seconds (see cook's notes p200), strain and refresh in iced water, then drain. Repeat blanching, straining and refreshing twice more, using fresh hot water each time. Bring sugar, 125ml grapefruit juice, 125ml water and rind to the simmer in a saucepan over low heat, stirring to dissolve sugar, until rind is tender and translucent and liquid reduces to a light syrup (20-25 minutes). Cool rind in syrup (1-2 hours). Candied grapefruit peel can be made 5 days ahead.
- 2 For lime curd, whisk eggs, sugar and lime juice in a heatproof bowl placed over a saucepan of simmering water until light, fluffy and mixture thickly coats the back of a spoon (4-5 minutes). Remove from heat and leave to cool (5 minutes), then whisk in butter a little at a time, beating well between additions. Cover and refrigerate until cold and set (2 hours), then transfer to a piping bag with a 3mm plain nozzle. Lime curd can be made 3 days ahead.
- **3** For ricotta, bring milk, cream and lemon juice to the boil in a stainless steel saucepan over low-medium heat without stirring. Remove from heat and set aside to cool until mixture separates into curds and whey (10-12 minutes). Transfer curds (discard whey) with a slotted spoon to a muslin-lined sieve placed over a bowl and refrigerate to drain (2-21/2 hours), then transfer ricotta to a bowl and refrigerate until required. Ricotta can be made a day ahead.
- 4 Preheat oven to 150C. Heat 8cm of oil in a large saucepan to 180C over medium-high heat. Meanwhile, whisk flour, icing sugar, baking powder and 1/8 tsp salt in a bowl. Whisk 3/4 cup of ricotta, eggs, milk and orange rind in a separate bowl, then whisk in flour mixture. Spoon half-tablespoonfuls of mixture into oil in batches (use a small ice-cream scoop to form the fritters if you have one; be careful hot oil will spit) and fry, turning occasionally, until deep golden-brown and cooked through (3-4 minutes). Remove with a slotted spoon and drain on paper towels, then transfer to a baking tray and keep warm in oven while you fry remaining fritters (ensure oil returns to 180C between batches).
- **5** Pierce fritters with the tip of the piping nozzle and carefully pipe in a little lime curd, wipe away excess curd and roll filled fritters in sugar. Serve warm, garnished with candied grapefruit.

Dulcev crémeux with hemp seeds and crème fraîche yuzu sorbet

"A Maude interpretation of a deconstructed lemon tart: the crémeux (French for creamy) is a rich, velvety pudding balanced by the tart yuzu sorbet – one doesn't work here without the other," says Stone. "Of course, crunch is important and the snappy hemp-seed tuile is en pointe." Start this recipe a day ahead to make the sorbet and crémeux.

Prep time 40 mins, cook 40 mins (plus chilling, freezing)

Serves 8

Finely grated rind of 1 lemon Crème fraîche yuzu sorbet

- 160 gm (²/₃ cup) caster sugar
- 60 gm (½ cup) powdered glucose
- 625 gm (2½ cups) crème fraîche
- 185 ml (¾ cup) yuzu juice (see note)

Dulcey crémeux

- 2 egg yolks
- 1 tbsp caster sugar
- 125 ml (½ cup) each milk and thickened cream
- titanium-strength gelatine leaf, softened in cold water for 5 minutes
- 145 gm Valrhona Dulcey chocolate (see note), melted

Hemp-seed tuiles

- 1 tbsp milk
- 25 gm unsalted butter
- 1½ tbsp caster sugar
- 1 tsp golden syrup (preferably Lyle's Golden
- 70 gm (½ cup) hemp seeds (see note) Sablé biscuits
- 75 gm (½ cup) plain flour, sieved
- 1½ tbsp cornflour
- 60 gm unsalted butter, room temperature
- 40 gm (1/4 cup) pure icing sugar
- 1 tbsp egg yolk (about 1 small yolk) Hemp-seed streusel
- 110 gm (¾ cup) plain flour
- 2 tbsp caster sugar
- 34 tsp baking powder
- 50 gm unsalted butter, frozen and coarsely grated
- 1 large eggwhite
- 2½ tbsp hemp seeds (see note)
- 1 For crème fraîche yuzu sorbet, heat sugar, glucose and 125ml water over medium heat. whisking occasionally, until syrup reaches 84C on a sugar thermometer (4-5 minutes). Pour into a tall container, place in an ice bath to cool completely, then add crème fraîche, yuzu juice, and $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp salt, and blend with a handheld blender. Cover and refrigerate for flavours to develop (4 hours or overnight) then churn in an ice-cream machine. Sorbet mixture can be made up to 3 days ahead, covered and refrigerated; frozen sorbet will keep for up to a week.
- 2 For crémeux, whisk yolks, sugar and 1/2 tsp salt in a bowl. Bring milk and cream just to the boil in a saucepan over medium heat, gradually whisk into yolk mixture, then return to pan and stir over low heat until thickened and mixture reaches 84C on a sugar thermometer (4-5 minutes). Squeeze excess water from gelatine, stir into milk mixture to

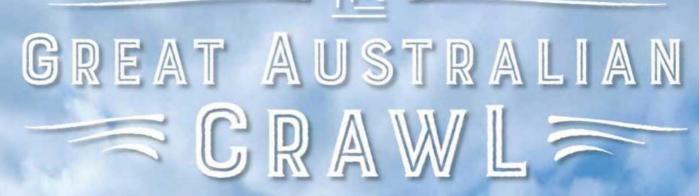
dissolve, strain through a fine strainer then add to chocolate in 3 batches, stirring to incorporate between each addition. Transfer to a container, cover closely with plastic wrap and refrigerate until set (6 hours or overnight). Crémeux can be made up to 3 days ahead.

- **3** For hemp-seed tuiles, stir milk, butter, sugar and golden syrup in a small saucepan over low heat until melted and smooth. Remove from heat, stir in hemp seeds, transfer to a container, cover and refrigerate until firm (4 hours). Preheat oven to 160C, spoon 1/4 cup tuile batter onto each of 2 silicone mats, cover with plastic wrap, then roll tuile batter with a rolling pin to a 24cm x 32cm rectangle. Gently remove plastic, transfer mats to baking trays and bake until golden (8-10 minutes). Cool mats on a flat surface then, using a small offset spatula, carefully lift and break sheets into 3cm-5cm pieces and store in an airtight container in single layers separated with baking paper. Make extra to allow for breakage. Tuiles will keep for 2-3 days
- 4 For sablé biscuits, mix flour, cornflour and 1/2 tsp salt in a small bowl. Beat butter and icing sugar in an electric mixer until pale and creamy (2-3 minutes), then beat in egg yolk. Reduce speed to low, then beat in flour mixture, scraping down sides of bowl, until dough just comes together. Turn out and form into a square, wrap in plastic wrap and refrigerate until firm (3 hours). Sablé dough will keep for 2 days, wrapped and refrigerated, or frozen for up to a month. Preheat oven to 160C and line an oven tray with baking paper. Roll dough between sheets of baking paper to 3mm thick then cut out twelve 5cm x 6cm, rectangles, transfer to prepared tray and refrigerate until firm (10-20 minutes). Bake until edges are golden (10-12 minutes), cool on trays, then store in an airtight container in single layers between pieces of baking paper.
- 5 For hemp-seed streusel, beat flour, sugar, baking powder, butter, eggwhite and ¼ tsp salt in an electric mixer on medium speed until mixture comes together in small clumps (4-5 minutes), then mix in hemp seeds. Spread on a baking tray lined with baking paper and freeze until frozen (1 hour), then bake, stirring halfway through until golden (12-15 minutes). Cool on tray, finely chop ½ cup streusel, then store fine and coarse streusel in separate airtight containers until required. Streusel will keep for 2 weeks.
- **6** To serve, stir crémeux until smooth, then transfer to a large pastry bag fitted with a large nozzle. Pipe a small dollop of crémeux in the centre of each serving plate and place sablé biscuit over it. Pipe crémeux alongside sablé, spoon a little chopped streusel alongside crémeux, scatter a little of the larger streusel over crémeux and gently place 2 hemp-seed tuiles into crémeux. Spoon sorbet onto chopped streusel, then finely grate lemon rind over the top and serve.

Note Yuzu juice is available from Japanese grocers. Valrhona Dulcey chocolate is available from select delicatessens. Hemp seeds are available from select health-food shops. Wine suggestion 2011 Gunderloch "Messidor,"

Beerenauslese, Rheinhessen, Germany.









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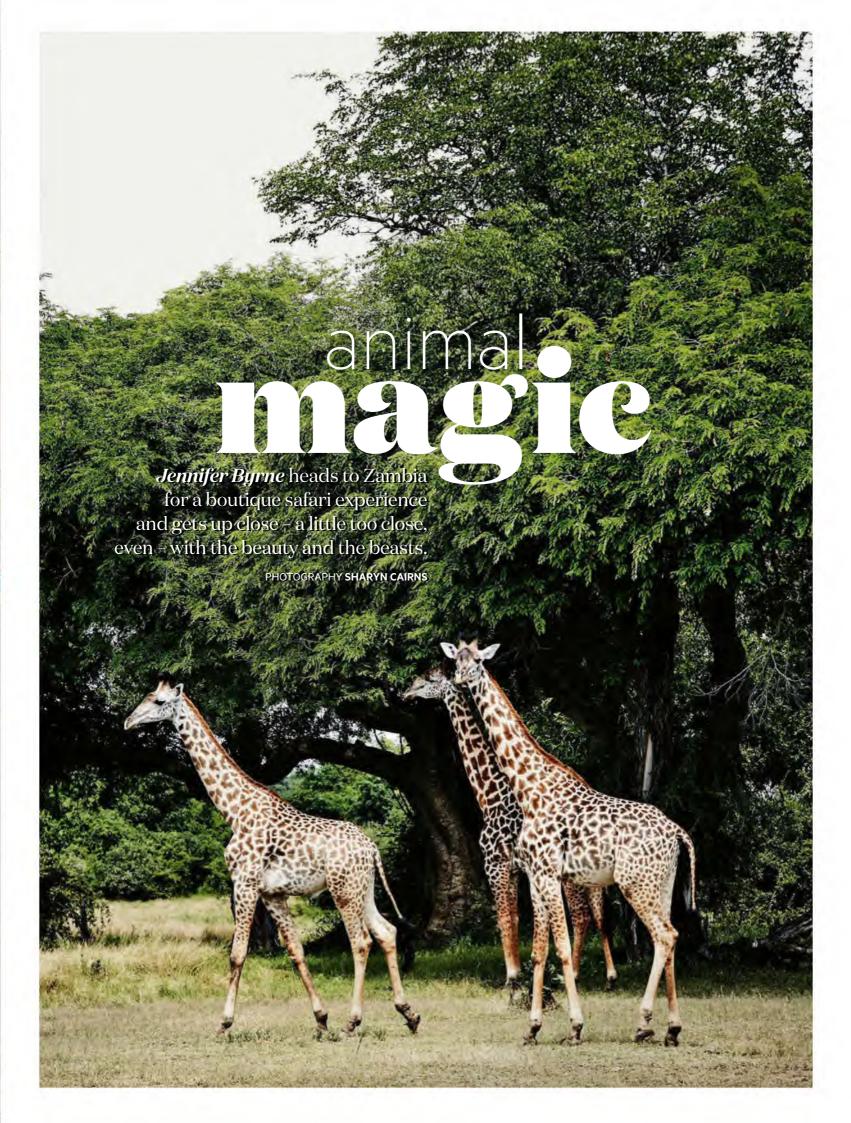
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Stay in the jeep. This is the golden rule on safari, as the guides keep reminding you. All human limbs inside the vehicle at all times – the idea being that if you're part of the jeep, you won't become part of the food chain. This is how wild animals see things, apparently, and I've always taken it as gospel, except this sunny evening on the plains of Zambia when it just doesn't seem to be working.

A young bull elephant, trunk lifted, ears flapping, heads purposefully towards the open side of our jeep. He's making strange strangled noises and his eyes — are they rolling? — suggest deep displeasure at having us turn up during grazing time with the family.

"Don't move," the guide tells the four of us, and waves his arms to make himself look fierce. "He'll stop," he says confidently. "Just stay where you are." Like, where else were we going?

We freeze in our seats. The elephant doesn't stop. He's less than a metre away, his huge head is down, advancing on my side of the vehicle, unfortunately, when the driver ducks, guns the engine, reverses at speed and hares off down the rutted dirt track. We're in retreat, the very thing you're told never to do when an elephant charges, but in this case...

The bull trumpets his triumph and chases us for a while, but finally peels off as we collapse on the floor. What happened there?

"Drunk," our guide Moses explains. An inebriated youngster showing off to his mother. And it's not an uncommon phenomenon, brought on by eating ripe fruit from the marula tree which grows abundantly on the Zambian grasslands, and is said to have an intoxicating effect on elephants.

This was such a winning explanation for aggressive behaviour – the pachyderm was tipsy, your honour – I should have left it at that. But I couldn't help myself. Later I checked it out and, sad to say, it didn't hold up. By means one can only imagine, researchers at Bristol University staged a series of experiments and reported no elephant could eat enough fermented marula berries to get sozzled.

Well, maybe. All I know is these same marula fruits have a powerful effect on humans when taken in the form of a potent liqueur called Amarula Gold, both the national tipple and one of the world's most popular duty-free buys. It's sold, whatever those scientists say, with a charging elephant on the label.

Such are the excitements of a safari in Zambia, a small and wonderfully game-rich republic which sits snugly in central-southern Africa, sharing borders with eight of the continent's most colourful players — among them Democratic Republic of the Congo, Angola, and one-time overlord, Zimbabwe, back when Zambia was part of greater Rhodesia.

Having eight neighbours is not always a blessing in this part of the world, and since founding president Kenneth Kaunda wrenched independence from Britain in 1964, Zambia's progress as a tourist-luring mecca has been somewhat unsteady.

It has the huge advantage, along with Zimbabwe, of being the access point to the natural wonder of Victoria Falls, where the mighty Zambezi River turns vertical, attracting droves of nature lovers and thrillseekers. I visited the Zambian service town of Livingstone (named after the famous explorer) a few years back and was mesmerised by a collection of fetishes and mummified organs — "as used by witch doctors" — in the local museum. This is, of course, not what every tourist is after, and when it comes to safaris, Zambia sits well down the African league table.

The big four destinations – Tanzania, Botswana, South Africa and Kenya – remain dominant players and first choice for many Australian travellers; they offer the sort of range and luxury that low-key Zambia has never gone in for in a big way. Hence this trip. Zambia is keen for new business and so we're headed to the country's premier national park, the South Luangwa, at the very edge of which lies Chinzombo Camp. Once a simple bush camp, it's been reimagined and transformed into a modern temple of safari chic.

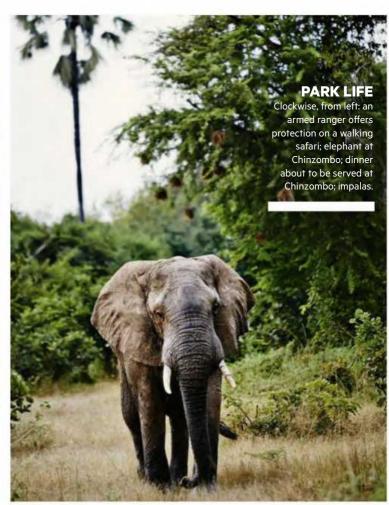
Getting there was an adventure in itself: a light-plane flight out of Lusaka that took us skimming above a green carpet of jungle broken by wide blue-brown ribbons glinting in the sun: the grand, meandering Zambezi, its vast floodplain ringed by mountains. At the cleared patch of earth that turned out to be an airport, we climbed aboard an open-sided vehicle for the 50-minute run along a single-lane highway to the gates of the park.

It was a quality 50 minutes, showing a slice of everyday Zambian life — and an immediate vindication for taking this road less travelled. We saw chattering children walking home from school, swinging their satchels, families threading through the fields after a day guarding their rice crops from birds. The evening air carried the smells of woodsmoke, grass and dung, and the unmistakable tang of fried meat, from the>

RIVER RUN

The mighty Zambezi wends its way through the Lower Zambezi National Park.





We're in retreat, the very thing you're told never to do when an elephant charges.







string of fires and stalls along the road. It was growing dark by the time we arrived at the park for spotlit glimpses of giraffes, elephants and chattering baboons. The road ran out at the Luangwa River and across the water were the shimmering lights of Chinzombo.

Lining the river were six elegant villas, simple but beautiful structures of pale wood and canvas designed by gun South African architects Silvio Rech and Lesley Carstens, famed for their work on the North Island resort in the Seychelles. Here, they've taken the Zambian tradition of the bush camp – the netting, thatching and reed walls – and added steel for strength, timber for solidity and a whizzy ecoconscious cooling system for comfort. Yet each villa sits lightly on the earth and can be taken down and all materials recycled without leaving a mark.

On the inside is soft fabric, deep limestone baths, long linen sofas and lots of creased old leather. Best of all, from the wide front decks, each with its own bright blue swimming pool, is a clear view of the river and the stretch of grass where hippos harrumph of a night and feed of a morning. The central bar and dining area is hung with old photos celebrating the lodge's history and, specifically, the extraordinary man who built the first camp on this site back in the 1970s. His name was Norman Carr.

I'd never heard of him, but it turns out Norman Carr was a formidable hunter, early conservationist and passionate Zambian — all in all, the classic "white African", as they used to call Europeans either born or reared in former African colonies who flatly refused the notion of settling anywhere else.

He was packed off to school in England when he was seven, returning in his late teens to work as elephant control officer and game warden in the Luangwa Valley. Like Joy Adamson in Born Free, Norman Carr reared orphaned lion cubs, Big Boy and Little Boy, and wrote a book (Return to the Wild) about their adventures at Chinzombo, including battles with a marauding pair of wild lions he named Goebbels and Stooge. The old photos show the big-pawed cubs shadowing Carr round the camp and later through the bush, where he taught them to hunt and fend for themselves before he released them.

He helped shape the early safari movement in his adopted country, most dramatically back in 1950 when he persuaded Luangwa's paramount Chief Nsefu to set aside a portion of his tribal lands in exchange for a share of the income from overseas visitors. There were doubts at the time: who would pay just to look at animals, the Chief wondered. But that land became Zambia's first game reserve.

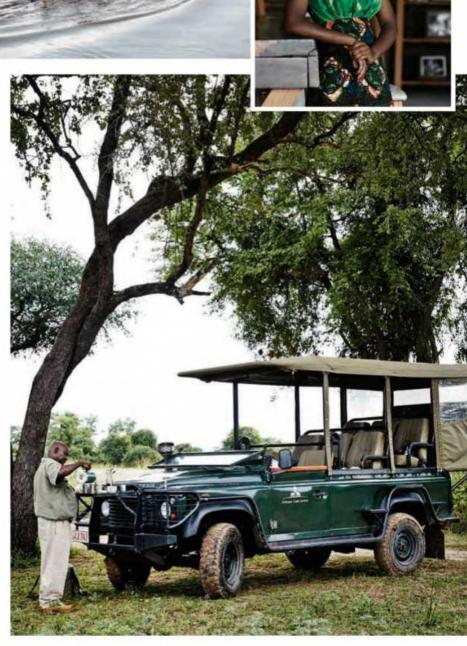
He built remote bush camps and linked them with guided walks, believing that a true safari involved not jeeps, but boots on the ground.

One of his old guides, Shadreck Nkoma, still works at Chinzombo and remembered when Norman Carr died in 1997: "It was like part of one of my own blood, a family member, was missing". His funeral was a>



SLEEPY WALLOW

Hippos in front of the lodge. Below: Chinzombo Camp manager Yaliwe Banda; guide Shadreck Nkoma brews up during a break from spotting game.



massive event: "I've never seen so many local people. An endless queue. It was Norman Carr who got the local people involved with conservation, to see the animals as more than just food."

Or, worse, trophies. Currency for poachers, who ravaged Zambia in the "poaching wars" of the 1970s and '80s when 90 per cent of the country's elephants were slaughtered, and the native rhinoceros population was completely wiped out. For all the efforts to convert poachers into protectors, the killing and trapping trades still flourish in the Luangwa, although hidden from most visitors' eyes.

Mornings and evenings are the golden times for a safari, when the light is clearest, the colours brightest and the animals most intent on getting their food. The peak season is between May and September when it's dry and the animals crowd together around the waterholes and lagoons. But the wet or green season earlier in the year, when I went, has a beauty of its own. Lush trees, swollen rivers and constant sightings of native species such as Thornicroft's giraffe and fat-rumped Crawshay's zebra. Packs of rare and lean African dogs stalk impala but rarely catch them, what with there being so much food around.

A cracking of bones in a shrub led us to a pregnant hyena. I saw waterbuck and warthogs and a pride of sleepy lions. A leopard scuttled down a tree at lightning speed. Crocodile tracks stretched far off into the bush. "Lots of rain and full rivers mean fewer animals come in to drink, so old man crocodile must travel," Shadreck explained.

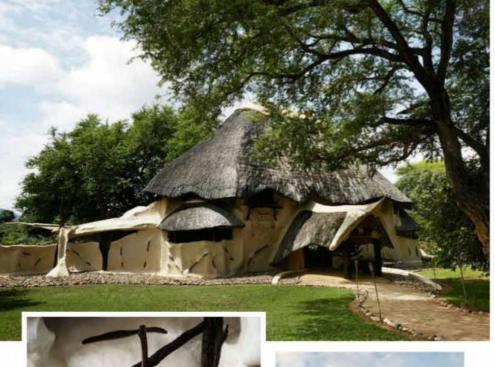
In honour of the man he called Bwana Carr, godfather of the walking safari, he hauled me out of the jeep one day - it's a strange feeling to wander exposed on the savannah, even when accompanied by a guide with a gun. Shaddy was in his element, issuing alarm calls to elephants, beating the bushes for birds. He pointed to deep holes formed by zebras rolling to rid themselves of parasites in the dry; in the wet they become wallows for hippos. It's the circle of life in the savannah, just like the Lion King said.

And at the end of each day was the extreme comfort of Chinzombo lodge, surrounded by giant stands of winter thorn and ebony trees. Its shelves groaned with books, its tables with food, from spicy stews to delicate white-iced cakes. "Let us run you a bath," they kept saying, and on the very last night I accepted, returning in muddy boots to follow the trail of flowers, seeds and fruits, which started at the ramp of the villa, threaded through the bedroom and ended at the very edge of a tub laid with towels and filled to the lip with hot water laced with sweet oils.

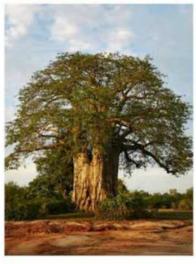
The difference between the Chinzombo of Carr's day when visitors stayed in simple huts and its current hot-and-cold-running splendour is dramatic: from dusty rustic to the epitome of luxe. There's no trace of that old camp: it's been swallowed by the river, which even now is eating away at the banks of the peninsula on which it's been rebuilt in its more>











THE FINE PRINT

GETTING THERE

Qantas operates daily flights from Sydney to Johannesburg. South African Airways has an African network with flights to Zambia. Proflight operates internal services in Zambia. qantas.com; flysaa.com; proflight-zambia.com

> **Chinzombo Camp** normancarrsafaris.com **Chongwe River House** chongweriverhouse.com

glamorous form. It may well become an island one day as the landscape shifts constantly.

What won't change is that across the river, some 9,000-plus square kilometres have been reserved as unfenced national park, in perpetuity.

Driving back along the highway, in daylight this time, we passed through the town of BP - named after the service station, its chief landmark. Hand-painted signs advertised the Faith hair salon, the God Gives restaurant and - my personal favourite - Cherabims executive barber shop.

Two flights later I arrived at another and very different camp to the south, on the riverine flood plain of the Lower Zambezi. It's called Chongwe River House, built by an old friend of Carr's. And while the business links are complicated (the same private investor pumping funds into Chinzombo is also the part-owner of Chongwe) the mood and feel are entirely different here.

Wet, wet, wet. An unexpected switch of season, in the form of stratospherically heavy downpours, has thrown maintenance into meltdown. There's flooding, no hot water and a nest of swallows encamped in one of the four bedrooms. I sensed a marvellous madness at work - for which this idiosyncratic house seems perfectly suited.

Designed by architect Neil Rocher, Chongwe River House is a vast, curvy structure moulded from sand-based ferrocement, with lianas twisting on its white walls and dark furniture of massive proportions, carved from a single fallen tree. It's a cross between a spaceship and a cave. Gaudí meets The Flintstones.

This is an aqueous environment, the confluence of two rivers (the Chongwe and the Zambezi). We went out in the boat at our private jetty for a chance to catch (and release) one of the continent's most prized freshwater game species, the tiger fish, aka the striped water dog. They weren't biting so I pushed for a quick trip to Zimbabwe, on the other side of the river - it looked so peaceful. It was not, the boatman said sharply. President Mugabe took a dim view of unauthorised visitors and was prone to jailing them.

The rain had stopped but floodwaters still flowed from the mountains; twice a day, we forded the deep, swift river between Chongwe camp and the national park. It was here we came across the angry elephant. We also saw a 500-year-old boab tree, which turns out to be not a tree, but the world's largest succulent. We also spotted traces of porcupine, watched the new moon rise, and spied the fluffy banded tail of a cat-like creature I never knew existed, the genet.

After dinner one night in the courtyard of "the Flintstone house", which features not a single straight line, the waiters and cooks sang us Zambian songs in the glow of the starlight.

My final safari was on water, on a light canoe travelling along a channel running directly off the Zambezi. The guides paddled quietly, murmuring to each other. The blacksmith lapwing made its tink-tink call, like the sound of a hammer striking metal. The air was crystal clear and after a week of 5am starts I found myself drifting into a daze, close to sleep. That was until the canoe shifted sharply left to let a herd of hippos pass on its way through.

This is what Zambia offers: a direct, unmediated interface with nature. No jostling or jockeying for pole position, at least in the wet season. And meeting good people who really want you to be here.

Driving away from Chinzombo, I remembered Shadreck pointing out his first school, now a block of concrete buildings stencilled with bright-coloured trees and animals; then, just an empty courtyard. "We took our lessons sitting under a tamarind tree and if it started to rain, school stopped. Now Norman Carr Safaris helps fund the school. This is what tourism can do for our country."

Zambia is a poor country of 72 tribes, sustained since its independence by copper exports, but now keen to carve out new possibilities for itself. A country blessed with abundant wildlife which has turned close to a third of its land over to national parks and nature reserves. Think of it as a big, green welcome mat - now with added style.











Viewed from the sea, Genoa tumbles down from the mountains and plunges into the water. It's an inspiring sight. On the high ridges above the city you can just make out the 18th-century Napoleonic walls, interspersed with forts and watchtowers. In the spring and summer, the creuse, the old mule tracks that join the Mediterranean scrub to the straggling suburbs up there, are a favourite haunt for hikers. Down in the city, Italy's sixth-largest and capital of the Liguria region, the atmosphere is less tranquil but also no less alluring.

Few places can have triggered such mixed reactions as Genoa. On his year-long sojourn in 1844, Charles Dickens saw contrasts that are still evident today. "Things that are picturesque, ugly, mean, magnificent, delightful and offensive break upon the view at every turn," he wrote. He was particularly repelled by the "unaccountable filth" and "the disorderly jumbling of dirty houses, one upon the roof of another". A year later, Gustave Flaubert begged to differ: "Now I am in a beautiful city, a truly beautiful city: Genoa... A city of marble, with gardens full of roses." Dickens also recalled "many hours of happiness and quiet". A century later, researching her book *Italian Food*, Elizabeth David wrote the place off as "the noisiest city in the world". But she had to contend with "the

crashing of trams and trains, the screeching of brakes". The only noise Dickens heard was the clamour of a band on a "festa-day".

I don't believe the din in Genoa is any more ear-splitting than that in other Italian metropolises: Rome, say, or Milan or Turin. But the city is a place of great buzz and bustle, most of it concentrated round its immense port, the biggest in the country. It was arriving here by train that I saw the Mediterranean for the first time. Then I was a student passing through, now I live an hour's car journey away and it's always a pleasure to drive down to Genoa. Or rather Genoas: the city has many different faces.

NAVAL GAZING

Clockwise from top: suburb-cum-resort Nervi; the Chiesa del Gesu in the city centre; and the village of Ne.











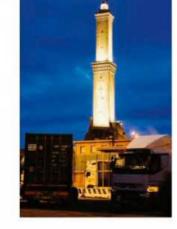
Piano has regenerated the dock area, adding new attractions and restoring old ones, in a *marriage of ancient and modern*.

An elevated autostrada cuts clean across the city. It runs parallel to the coast but, coming in from the west through the working-class neighbourhoods of Voltri and Sampierdarena, the sea is blotted out by cranes, funnels, flags, masts, piers, containers, huge ferries to and from Sardinia, Corsica, North Africa and Spain, and all the other paraphernalia of the waterfront. Then the Lanterna comes into view, a tall medieval lighthouse and the symbol of the city for other Italians.

Further on still are the silhouettes of contemporary symbols, the buildings erected for the Expo 1992 exhibition, held to celebrate the fifth centenary of the discovery of America by Genoa's favourite son, Christopher Columbus (though chances are he was actually born in Savona, just down the coast). The exhibition complex was designed in the Porto Antico, or old port, by another local boy, architect Renzo Piano. Piano is famous for projects all over the world, from the Centre Georges Pompidou in Paris to the Jean-Marie Tjibaou Cultural Centre in Nouméa in New Caledonia, from the New York Times Tower to The Shard London Bridge. In his home town he has regenerated a whole section of the dock area, adding new attractions and restoring old ones, including a row of former cotton

warehouses, in an imaginative marriage of ancient and modern. It's ongoing: as I write the papers are full of a new Piano idea for a walkway from the docks down to the city's waterside international fair complex, a kilometre or so south.

Piano's Aquarium is the second largest in Europe and welcomes 100,000 visitors a month. It recreates 70 marine ecosystems and hosts dugongs and dolphins, seals and sharks, plus penguins, the biggest crowd-pullers of all. The Bigo is a mega installation designed to evoke the dockland skyline. It consists of a splaying cluster of tall white poles and incorporates a rotating panoramic lift that climbs 40 metres into the sky to offer stunning views over sea and city. The centrepiece of the huge Galata Museum of the Sea is the reconstruction of a 40-metre 17th-century galley. The place also houses 6000 exhibits that recount the history of Genoese naval exploits and a moving section dedicated to emigration to the Americas in the late 19th century. "La Bolla", or Bubble, finally, is a steel and glass sphere suspended in mid-air in which a small botanical garden recreates a tropical forest environment complete with endangered plant and animal species. A family with kids could easily spend>



SEA AND DO

Clockwise from top:
Piazza de Ferrari, the
hub of city life; the
aquarium; the old town;
the Lanterna, Genoa's
lighthouse; the Loggia
dei Mercanti on Piazza
Banchi; and a grocer's
store on Via San Bernardo.







a week in the Expo area - and a great many of them choose to do exactly that.

The sea was and is Genoa's backyard. In the Middle Ages the city fought Venice in a battle of giants for control of the Mediterranean. If Venice was "La Serenissima", the Most Serene One, then Genoa was "La Superba", the Proud One. Both cities were run by doges, both were centres of banking and trade - the Genoese claim their San Giorgio bank was the world's first - and both boasted powerful navies. The Genoese controlled the Tyrrhenian Sea and established colonies on the Black Sea, in the Middle East and in North Africa. The inhabitants of Carloforte, on the island of San Pietro off the south-west coast of Sardinia, still speak the dialect of the city. Ironically, it was precisely the discovery of America and the increased importance of Atlantic ports that began to erode Genoa's influence - that and the rise of the Ottoman Empire in the east. In the 16th century the city had been one of the most powerful, most populated in Europe, "la ville capitaliste par excellence", according to French historian Fernand Braudel. Then decline set in and its prestige waned.

The sea still utterly dominates the life of the city nonetheless. Every day on the local TV news one sees port officials and navy officers in smart white uniforms meeting round long tables; camalli (dockworkers and stevedores), out on strike and walking through the streets on protest marches; regattas and boat shows (since 1962 the Genoa International Boat Show has been a big draw for the world's yachting fraternity). The elegant boulevards of the modern part of town around Brignole station are lined with the offices of shipping and maritime insurance companies. And last year the wreck of the Costa Concordia cruise ship was dragged up from the island of Giglio off Tuscany to be dismantled in the port of Genoa. Water, water everywhere - physically and notionally.

The city's maritime tradition is still evident in the character of its people: hardworking, with a strong sense of identity and belonging. They are famous in Italy for their tight-fistedness, like the Scots in the English-speaking world. They resemble the Scots in other ways, too: inquisitive and adventurous, singleminded and pioneering, they are always inventing, always leaving their mark. If the Scots gave us, among many other things, the telephone and the television and penicillin, we have the Genoese to thank for jeans (from de Gênes, the name the French called the stiff blue cloth they imported from the city), Genoa cake and the Genoa jib. If Scots explorers like Mungo Park and David Livingstone blundered through jungles and across savannahs to chart Africa, Christopher Columbus faced the unknown to give us America, after which another likely Genoese, John Cabot, mapped some of its northern Atlantic shores. There's a statue of Columbus in front of the main station, the Stazione Principe, and his father is said to have worked as a gatekeeper at the medieval Porta Soprana. An ivy-clad house that stands nearby purports to be where the great man himself spent his boyhood.

High up above the old harbour, the hub of city life is Piazza de Ferrari with its fine monumental fountain. It marks the boundary between arcaded 19th-century Genoa and the older quarters. Indeed, Henry James wasn't wrong when he described this as "The most winding and incoherent of cities, the most entangled topographical ravel in the world". But it's also true that the city centre concentrates most of its landmarks into a relatively small area and can be visited on foot with cog railway and lifts to come to your rescue should you need them. It's best to visit in spring or autumn when it's not too hot, although I'd avoid late October and early November, when violent storms are becoming an increasingly common phenomenon. Last year terrible flooding caused huge damage across the city.

Piazza de Ferrari itself is a good starting point for a walking tour. Worth a visit on the adjoining Piazza Matteotti is the elegant Palazzo Ducale, now a veritable

The Palazzo Doria-Tursi; the tomaxelle at La Brinca in Ne: local delicacies on offer in the Porto Antico area.





The sun shines in the piazzettas, where old men and women sit outside, *cats roam and waiters scuttle* about in front of bars.

cultural centre and venue for many a prestigious international exhibition. Nearby, on Via Garibaldi, Palazzo Rosso and Palazzo Bianco are home to two of the city's finest art collections. Genoa has few homegrown painters to talk of, but in the 16th century nobles who'd grown rich from trade and finance attracted artists from abroad to paint their portraits. First Rubens, then Van Dyck came to work in Genoa, and the works of the latter in particular are scattered in palaces and galleries all over the city and the region.

Descending seawards from Via Garibaldi you move from the 16th century to the Middle Ages, which is when the old centro storico began to spring up. The old quarters of the great Mediterranean port cities - Naples, Marseilles, Barcelona, Casablanca – all cast a magical, albeit slightly disreputable, spell of their own and Genoa's is no exception. Recent immigration has changed the face of most Italian cities, but old Genoa has always been a casbah-like place of coming and going. Today, as in the past, old salts and Long John Silver types rub shoulders with newcomers from every continent. This labyrinthine maze of lanes – caruggi in dialect - courtyards, loggias and porticoes was named a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2006. Here the noble palazzi, or rolli, are as tall and straight as the caruggi - not all of which you'd wish to venture down - are narrow and crooked. Spurred on by the wealthy merchant families, architects were forced by the lack of space to build skywards. The lofty buildings bear the old family names: Palazzo Doria, Palazzo Spinola, Palazzo Adorno, Palazzo Serra, Palazzo Parodi... It's

like an olde-worlde Manhattan. I remember when the façades of the rolli were black with grime. They were scrubbed clean for Genoa's year as Capital of European Culture in 2004 and now stand out above the scruffy charm of their surrounds. The sun only shines in the piazzettas, where old men and women sit outside houses on stools, cats roam and waiters scuttle about in front of bars. Dozens of small bakeries and friggitorie, or fried food shops, line the lanes and the air is dense with the odour of focaccia, baked chickpea flour crêpes (farinata), potato fritters (cuculli), and spring onion and zucchini fritters (frisceu).

Liguria has the most vegetarian of Italy's regional cuisines — although not entirely so, given its enduring love affair with tripe. Flat-leafed greens and other vegetables, not to mention pine kernels, walnuts and mushrooms, are used to make soups and sauces, to stuff ravioli and to fill pies. Torta verde, for example, is a Swiss chard pie; its name changes to torta pasqualina in the Easter period when eggs are stuck in the middle.

Aromatic herbs such as oregano, rosemary, parsley, sage and marjoram are also widely used. The most popular of all is basil, which you'll see growing in old tomato tins on the balconies of old Genoa in summer. The best variety, basilico Genovese, with small, highly scented leaves, the one preferred to make arguably the most famous local recipe, pesto, is grown in Pra in the western suburbs. Historically, the cooking of Liguria is seen as a classic example of cucina povera, the result of people using the few poor ingredients at their disposal inventively. But as a late acquaintance of mine, food>

BAY WATCH

The curved façade of the stock exchange faces into Piazza de Ferrari, Genoa's main square; a small bay encloses fishing village Boccadasse; dough is prepared for farinata. historian Giovanni Rebora, used to point out, pesto is an exception. To make it, pine kernels were imported from Tuscany, pecorino cheese from Sardinia and salt from the Sicilian islands. None of these ingredients came cheap and blending them with basil was more a symbol of Genoese expansion than of popular ingeniousness.

Good places to eat traditional fare in the city are Ostaia da U Santu, on a hilltop above Voltri with its own vegetable garden, and Osteria di Vico Palla, down in the old port, renowned locally for its baccalà. But if you have time and a car, do as I do and head out east to the small country village of Ne, where there's a restaurant serving truly authentic dishes, some of them veritable rarities. By autostrada, the journey takes no more than 30 minutes, but I suggest you go part of the way along the old coast road to take in the delightful Boccadasse, a timeless fishing village straight out of a '50s movie; Quarto, whence Garibaldi and his Thousand embarked for Sicily; and Nervi, an elegant suburb-cum-resort where footballers have their villas. All are within the city limits.

Stop off in the historic seaside town of Chiavari. Here, Catia Saletti's Gastronomia Mosto is a deli where you can eat in or take away local specialties of land and sea, or buy a vast range of wines, spirits and coffees. Catia is the daughter of a star chef from Ferrara, where

Ne itself, inland from Lavagna, isn't so much a village as a muddle of outlying hamlets. The place to eat here is La Brinca, a hilltop osteria where local-born Sergio Circella and his family serve a menu that reads like a dialect dictionary: prebugiun, a mush of potatoes and cavolo nero; tomaxelle, veal roulades stuffed with aromatic herbs, pine kernels and mushrooms; sancrau,

THINK LOCAL

Sergio Circella (below) of La Brinca, Ne; onion soup with anchovies and croûtons at Antica Osteria di Vico Palla in Genoa's old port (right); and the alpine village of Ne (bottom). Opposite: Genoa's skyline.



At Cimitero Staglieno all manner of statuary and tracery, drapery and masonry *evoke and exalt* stories of anonymous lives.

the food is rich and sumptuous. She came to live in Liguria with her late husband, Franco, Chiavari born and bred, and under his wing learned to simplify her style. She now wows the locals with her torta verde and classic cima alla Genovese, a breast of veal cut open to form a pouch, stuffed with a mixture of minced veal, sweetbreads, brains, bone marrow, eggs, peas and Parmigiano, boiled and served cold in slices.

the local take on sauerkraut; baciocca, a pie filled with local quarantina potatoes and red onions; piccagge, a sort of tagliatelle; mandilli de sea, or "silk handkerchiefs", ultra-fine fresh pasta squares served with either pesto or creamed mushrooms.

Believe me, it's all worth the journey. And if you wanted to stay on for a few relaxing – and detoxifying – days on the beach, swanky resorts such as Rapallo, Portofino and Santa Margherita are all in easy reach.

Once back in Genoa, macabre as it may sound, a good place to end a tour is the Cimitero Staglieno, the municipal monumental cemetery up in the hills. "It's hard to imagine a better resting place," wrote Evelyn Waugh. But somewhere Ernest Hemingway called "one of the wonders of the world" must have a lot going for it and Staglieno does. All manner of statuary and tracery, drapery and masonry evoke and exalt stories of anonymous lives. It was visited and admired by the likes of Mark Twain, Tolstoy, Lloyd George and D'Annunzio and there are plaques to prove it. Among the "residents" are Giuseppe Mazzini, Garibaldi's second-in-command Nino Bixio, Oscar Wilde's wife, Constance Lloyd, and Fabrizio De André, the local singer-songwriter-turned-national treasure. This huge, phantasmagoric Disneyland of the dead holds surprises at every corner, much like the sprawling city below.

As I said, there are many Genoas.





GETTING THERE

Qantas, with partner Emirates, operates daily A380 services to Rome, with onwards connections to Genoa with Alitalia. qantas.com

STAY Hotel Bristol Palace

This inviting, luxury Art Nouveau hotel is just a stone's throw from Piazza de Ferrari and all the most important palazzi and museums. Via XX Settembre 35, +39 1059 2541, hotelbristolpalace.it

Agnello D'Oro

A comfortable hotel housed in a 16th-century convent, it affords fantastic sweeping views over the old town and the Porto Antico. Vico delle Monachette 6, +39 10246 2084, hotelagnellodoro.it

Hotel Cairoli

Certainly one of Genoa's accommodation highlights, this smart, recently renovated eco-friendly hotel is in the heart of the old town. The décor in each room is dedicated to a different modern artist. Via Cairoli 14/4, +39 1024 61454, hotelcairoligenova.com

EAT Ostaia da U Santu

An osteria on a hill with a pergola overlooking the sea represents an oasis of peace in the busy Voltri neighbourhood. Enjoy the good, old-fashioned seasonal Genoese cooking. Via al Santuario delle Grazie 33, Voltri (Genoa), +39 10613 0477, ostaiadausantu.com

Antica Osteria

In this old vaulted sailors' tavern near the restored cotton warehouses and the Expo area you could imagine Columbus sitting down to break bread – and they say Van Dyck actually did. Vico Palla 15/R, +39 10246 6575, anticaosteriavicopalla.com

Gastronomia Mosto

Eat in or take away traditional Ligurian fare and street food made with fresh local ingredients. Via Entella 55, Chiavari, +39 347130 4619

La Brinca

Set on a hilltop with a terrace overlooking the valley of Ne, La Brinca boasts a full repertoire of dishes from Genoa and its province, some of them historical rarities. Local farms supply ingredients. Via Campo di Ne 58, Ne, +39 18533 7480, labrinca.it

SHOP Antica Drogheria Torielli

This lovely historic grocer's shop is worth a look for its original furnishings. It evokes Genoa's maritime glory, stocking everything from jasmine teas to Aleppo pine kernels, from candied fruits to spices from all over the world.

Via S. Bernardo, 32R +39 10246 8359

Pietro Romanengo fu Stefano

Since 1780, this has been one of Italy's finest confectioneries, famous for its candied fruits, marrons glacés and fruit and flower petal preserves. There's much to admire in the stunning façade and period furnishings. *Piazza Soziglia*, 74/76R, +39 10247 4574, romanengo.it

DO Expo Area

Check the opening times for its various attractions. acquariodigenova.it

Staglieno Cemetery

Fascinating; check opening times and transport links. *visitgenoa.it*





Brisbane is experiencing an accommodation revolution and is leading the field when it comes to upscale hotel development around the country. In the past 12 months, a suite of new properties have opened their doors and many more developments are in the pipeline. Put simply, Brisbane is "hot", says Accommodation Association of Australia chief executive officer, Richard Munro. "Brisbane, Sydney and Melbourne are enjoying record occupancy levels, and this has manifested into new development opportunities. And it's Brisbane that's setting the pace for new properties."

Long-lead preparations for last year's G20 Leaders' Summit in the Queensland capital acted as a wake-up call, says Munro, throwing a spotlight on the shortage of five-star hotels in the city. Government initiatives to address the hotel shortfall ranging from fee waivers to setting aside specific development sites - are bearing fruit fast. Last year marked the end of Brisbane City Council's three-year waiver of infrastructure charges for new four- and five-star hotels. Before this incentive, there had been no major CBD hotel openings in a decade. Since the fee moratorium, 12 new hotel applications have been approved.

Last year, 5,161,000 domestic travellers spent the night in Brisbane, with almost a million overseas tourists sleeping over in the nine months to September. Lord Mayor of Brisbane, Graham Quirk, says demand for hotel rooms is on the rise from leisure as well as business travellers. "Last year it was revealed that Brisbane was forgoing an estimated 278,000 room nights every year due to a shortage of internationally recognised full-service hotel rooms," says Cr Quirk. "Since then, however, approximately 575 additional hotel rooms and 337 serviced apartments have come online, with a number of key hotels opening and more are set for completion in the coming months."

Boutique property Spicers Balfour Hotel in inner-city New Farm isn't new - it opened in 2010 - but it's in expansion mode. By spring it will have all but doubled in size. Eight new luxury suites are being created in an Art Deco building located two doors down from its original nine-suite Queenslander. Spicers Balfour Hotel general manager, Sam Giles, says Balfour's new rooms are geared towards leisure travellers. They will be larger than the existing options, averaging 35 square metres compared with 17 to 24 square metres.

"We've been running at between 87 per cent and 92 per cent occupancy, so we felt the demand was there for new rooms," says Giles. The investments being carried out by Spicers and other hotel groups are in response to changing traveller behaviour patterns. "In the past, tourists thought there wasn't a lot to do in Brisbane, so they'd fly in and drive out to the Gold Coast or the Sunshine Coast or Byron Bay. Now they spend one or two nights in the CBD first."

If you're in the market for a hotel room in Brisbane, whether it be a new property or an established one, now's the time to bag a five-star bargain, says Munro. "When new properties come along, everyone looks at their product and tries to improve. Initially this means discounting, which is great for consumers."







BRISBANE'S BEST NEW PLAYERS

TRYP FORTITUDE VALLEY HOTEL

It's difficult to imagine how this 65-room hotel could better suit its groovy-but-still-gritty location. It's covered in street art, with a portrait rendered by Melbourne artist Rone adorning three upper storeys of the façade. It also has one of Australia's coolest breakfast options - chef Warren Turnbull's Chur Burger is at street level and his team also looks after in-room dining.

Five storeys above the ground, reached via custom-glass elevator, is Turnbull's colourful rooftop bar, Up on Constance. Tryp's interiors are just as eclectic, pops of orange and blue resonating with the ubiquitous street art. Each floor features artworks and murals by a single practitioner. The artists Rone, Beastman, Numskull and Fintan Magee used to break into the building when it lay derelict. Designers retained many of the existing pieces and added new works. Tryp's difference is the

effort it makes to embrace the neighbourhood. Managed by Wyndham, the motto for guests is "own the city", and staff look the part, wearing Brisbane designer Black Milk. Best party digs? Two of the king rooms have external astroturfed terraces with a four-person spa. Rooms from \$149. Tryp Fortitude Valley Hotel, 14-20 Constance St, Fortitude Valley, (07) 3319 7888, trypbrisbane.com

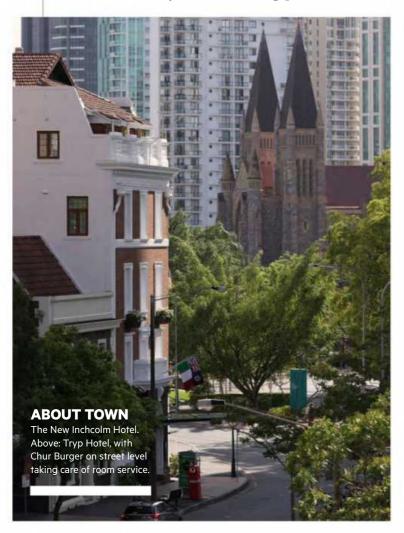
NEXT HOTEL BRISBANE

Sitting right in the heart of the CBD is Next Hotel by SilverNeedle Hospitality - a clever revamp of an old Brisbane icon, Chifley at Lennons. For a city-centre hotel aimed at the business traveller, the 304-room, 20-storey Next Hotel crams in a swag of cool recreational nice-to-haves. Exit the hotel on Burnett Lane side and you'll encounter a quirky mix of alleyway finds: slick eatery The Survey Co. industrially chic bar Super Whatnot, Felix Espresso and Wine Bar, plus The Record Exchange, a huge>





"Well-travelled young people come to Next Hotel looking for fun. So from early on a Saturday we're seeing pool cocktails – it's like *a little slice of Miami in Brisbane*."



second-hand vinyl store and more. Leave from the Queen Street Mall exit and you're in the middle of Brisbane's busiest shopping strip.

The rooms are well-designed and functional rather than glam, but deliver some five-star touches for your four-star tariff. This flagship brand of Singapore-based SilverNeedle Hospitality has invested heavily in technology. Its smartphone check-in and smartphone-operated hotel rooms are examples of the fresh thinking that's altering the landscape for guests. In particular, frequent travellers welcome the chance to select a room online and go straight up, bypassing reception.

General manager Alexander Billing says the bulk of Next's rooms are occupied by corporates and business travellers midweek, but at the weekend, the demographic changes. "We're seeing lots of 25- to 35-year-old well-travelled people looking for fun. So from early on a Saturday we're seeing pool cocktails – it's like a little slice of Miami in Brisbane."

The rooftop terrace, with a cool 20-metre pool, is another game-changer. Facilities in the lounge range from a bar and pool to sleep pods, showers, locker rooms, a help-yourself pantry and 24-hour gym. They are available to all guests, not just those who pay extra. There's generosity, too, in the minibar policy, which offers four items free of charge daily.

Hungry? Smart-casual Lennons Restaurant & Bar has Todd Adams, formerly of Stokehouse Brisbane, at the burners, grilling whole local Moreton Bay whiting and serving it with lemon, rosemary and fennel salt, or a steak cooked on the parrilla, with a buckwheat and quinoa salad and smoked yoghurt. Rooms from \$229 including breakfast. Next Hotel Brisbane, 72 Queen St, Brisbane, (07) 3222 3222, silverneedlehotels.com/next

THE NEW INCHCOLM HOTEL & SUITES

There's a jaunty Knightsbridgemeets-New York feel to the fetching white stucco and brick exterior of Brisbane's first MGallery hotel. Last year's \$8 million revamp has been rewarded with an official five-star rating by AAA Tourism and the room tally sits at 50, including some double-storey, light-filled, New York-style loft suites in a modern addition at the back of>

























the property. Rooms are elegant and individual – Robertson Design Studio International has blended old and new, featuring layered patterns and glam touches like four-poster beds in some suites, with bespoke room carpets and custom mirrors throughout. The scale is intimate with a definite nod to the site's heritage.

Thomson's Reserve Restaurant tables are linen-dressed at night and chef Andrew McCrea serves contemporary dishes with a local focus – the likes of Hervey Bay scallops with pig's cheek, sea parsley and preserved lemon "paint" or perhaps organic duck with fennel, aniseed and apple. Rooms from \$249. The New Inchcolm Hotel & Suites, 73 Wickham Tce, Brisbane, (07) 3226 8888, inchcolm.com.au

GAMBARO HOTEL

This four-storey inner-city hotel is a surprise package – a glam oasis of Hirsch Bedner-designed interiors a footie kick from Suncorp Stadium. It's not clear whether UN secretary general Ban Ki-moon made the most of its location (*GT* 2015 Bar of the Year, Lefty's Old Time Music Hall, is staggering distance) when he stayed, but German Chancellor Angela Merkel impressed locals by hitting the Caxton Street strip during the G20.

The Gambaro family has been in hospitality since the 1950s, starting out with a simple fish and chip shop, and the hotel's dramatic atrium artwork, featuring shoals of fish, is an homage to humble beginnings. The big selling point here, apart from the five-star trappings, is the genuine warmth of a family operation generated by the hands-on owner-operators.

Entry-level rooms back onto the light-filled atrium, so while the interior palette is Armani-muted, it's not too dark. Double-glazing is also super-effective – and necessary, given the proximity to Caxton Street. But 49 of the 68 rooms have balconies, so you have the choice to scope out the street action from above.

Top digs are the two-bedroom suites – the JG Suite hosted a bilateral meeting during G20, but the fourth-floor Paddington Deluxe suite gives sports fans the best vistas of Suncorp Stadium. Rooms from \$199. Gambaro Hotel,



LOCAL CUSTOMS

From top: Tryp immerses you in Fortitude Valley's alterno-vibe; Next lands you amid laneway culture; parrilla-grilled rib-eye steak, with quinoa and buckwheat salad and smoked yoghurt at Lennons Restaurant & Bar.

33 Caxton St, Petrie Terrace, (07) 3369 9500, gambarohotel.com.au

NEW AND NOTEWORTHY

CAPRI BY FRASER

Four-and-a-half-star Capri by Fraser, is aimed at the "always connected" traveller. The hotel residence property opened in April, and also offers a range of what it calls e-efficiencies, including iPad check-ins and an e-concierge. The attention to detail extends to the on-site laundry kitted out as a 24/7 "Spin and Play" laundrette, so guests can play foosball and Xbox Kinect between spin cycles. Rooms from \$179. Capri by Fraser, 80 Albert St, Brisbane, 1800 110 800, brisbane.capribyfraser.com/en

MORE TO COME

EMPORIUM HOTEL SOUTH BANK

The Emporium Hotel, Fortitude Valley – a pioneer in the Brisbane boutique hotel scene – also has a 144-suite sibling under way at South Bank as part of a \$590 million development. Plans there include an infinity pool and sky deck overlooking the city. Due 2016.

ICON NORTHSHORE HAMILTON

Wentworth Properties' five-star, 227-room hotel will be part of a \$650 million development at Northshore, Hamilton.

THE JOHNSON

Brisbane's first Art Series Hotel will be housed in a heritage-listed Karl Langer building in Spring Hill. Due to open in 2016, the 11-storey, \$155 million development will combine around 100 guest suites with residential apartments.

PULLMAN BRISBANE AIRPORT

Brisbane Airport's first five-star hotel is due late 2016. It's another project from the Flynn Property Group and Scott Flynn Properties, who first developed the Novotel Brisbane Airport in 2009.

QUEEN'S WHARF DEVELOPMENT

Construction is set to start in 2017 on Echo Entertainment's massive redevelopment of Queen's Wharf. Under the plans, Treasury Casino will morph into a five-star Ritz Carlton Hotel and at least four other premium hotels will feature.

RYDGES

As part of the \$2.9 billion revamp of Brisbane's RNA Showgrounds at Bowen Hills, Rydges has a 208-room property under way, to open in 2016. That's on top of a \$12 million refit of Rydges South Bank to bring the venue in line with its awardwinning restaurant, Bacchus.

W HOTEL

This 32-storey structure will bring 305 rooms on the old Supreme Courts site overlooking the river and is due to open early 2018.









Hong Kong calling Neil Perry takes Maggie Scardifield on a whistle-stop

tour of his best-loved haunts in one of his favourite cities.



Neil Perry loves the energy of Hong Kong but it's the food, of course, that has a real hold on his heart - so much so he's returned to the city more than 30 times since he first visited over 20 years ago. "Every time I visit, I walk away with inspiration and a respect for Chinese cooking," he says. Here are his picks for what to do with 24 hours in Hong Kong.

Kowloon to Central on The Star Ferry

As much cultural touchstone as mode of transport, The Star Ferry has been running between Kowloon and Hong Kong since 1888. "A lot of the places I like to go to are in Central, so if I stay in Kowloon it's an easy trip on the ferry," says Perry. "It's cheap, easy and offers an amazing opportunity to see Hong Kong from the water." Star Ferry Concourse, Tsim Sha Tsui, Kowloon, +852 2367 7065, \$16 for an adult round trip; starferry.com.hk

DUMPLING GROUND

Clockwise from above: Peking duck at Lung King Heen; Graham Street wet markets; Perry at the markets: Lung King Heen's gold-topped har gau.

Graham Street wet markets

"This is a glimpse of the original Hong Kong city; it's where all the action is," says Perry. Look out for ingredients that are unavailable in Australia such as fresh straw mushrooms and bamboo clams. Perry also suggests stocking up on dried and fermented goods such as shrimp paste, black vinegars and soy at Kowloon Soy Co. "The taste difference is like chalk and cheese to the imitation stuff in Australia."

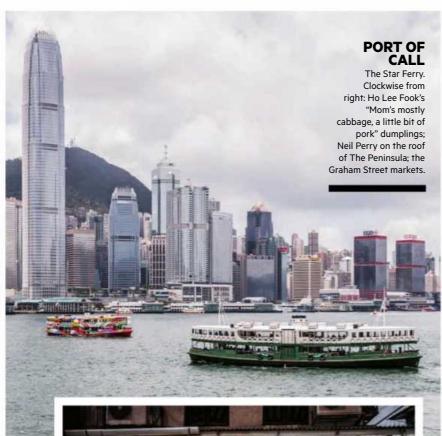
Graham Street wet markets, Graham St (between Queen's and Hollywood rds), Central; Kowloon Soy Co Ltd, 9 Graham St G/F, Central, +852 2544 3695

World-class dumplings at three-Michelin star restaurant Lung King Heen

"These are the very best dumplings in the city," says Perry. "The quality of the wrappers is exquisite." Dim sum from a daily-changing menu such as gold-leaf topped har gau are prepared and cooked to order by executive chef, Chan Yan Tak, while suckling pig, pigeon and Peking duck from the roast kitchen are also worth seeking out. "The duck here has one of the most crisp skins in all of Hong Kong." Lung King Heen, The Four Seasons Hotel, 8 Finance St, Central, +852 3196 8888, fourseasons.com

Helicopter flight from The Peninsula Hong Kong

You don't have to be staying at The Peninsula to book a 15-minute whip-around on the hotel's chopper, which takes off from the roof. "From the helicopter you can see all the building going on and out across Hong Kong's beaches," says Perry. "It's strangely almost like being in the Mediterranean." The Peninsula Hong Kong, Salisbury Rd, Tsim Sha Tsui, Kowloon, +852 2802 0200, \$1765 for 15 minutes, heliservices.com.hk







Modern Cantonese at Ho Lee Fook and Mott $32\,$

Chef Jowett Yu, an alumnus of Sydney restaurants Mr Wong and Ms G's, heads the kitchen at Ho Lee Fook. The food — slow-cooked wagyu short rib, say — is "fresh, hip and has a great energy about it", says Perry. Ibérico pork char siu ("the wagyu of pork") is a standout, meanwhile, at Mott 32. "As soon as it hits your mouth it starts melting." Ho Lee Fook, 1 Elgin St, Central, +852 2810 0860, holeefookhk.tumblr.com; Mott 32, Standard Chartered Bank Building, 4-4a Des Voeux Rd, Central, +852 2885 8688, mott32.com

Cocktails and views at Sevva

Perry's pick for after-dinner drinks is Sevva – an outdoor terrace bar on the 25th floor in the middle of Central. "It has the most phenomenal views of the city and there's always great music."

Sevva, Prince's Building 25th Floor, 10 Chater Rd, Central, +852 2537 1388

Bespoke suits at Apsley

"It's hard to put on a suit off the rack once you've had one made for you," says Perry. "These guys have a Savile Row connection and use beautiful fabrics." Three suits (each with two sets of trousers) will set you back \$5000. If you can't make it to Hong Kong, the tailors visit Australia twice a year.

Apsley Bespoke Tailors, Shop G & H, ground floor, Burlington House, 90-94c Nathan Rd, Tsim Sha Tsui, Kowloon, +852 2366 5635

Wonton soup in the Qantas Lounge, Hong Kong

"The broth is boiled for about seven hours with dried fish, shrimp and chicken bones," says Perry. "And the noodles have a wonderful bite to them."

Qantas Hong Kong Lounge, level 7 (above gate 15), Hong Kong International Airport, 1 Sky Plaza Rd, +852 2261 0422 ●



GETTING THERE

Qantas has 21 non-stop flights a week to Hong Kong from Australia, including daily flights from Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane, with connections from all other Australian cities.



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travelnews

WHERE TO BE & WHAT TO SEE AROUND THE WORLD

EDITED BY ANTHEA LOUCAS

HOTEL COVELL; ALIMENTO CHEF ZACH

POLLACK (INSET)

SAY YOU WOOD

This handcrafted timber keyboard from French firm Orée is both contemporary and eco-friendly. Each wireless design is made from a single piece of wood and the keyboard comes in a recycled-leather pouch that doubles as a stand. Orée wooden keyboard and leather pouch, \$345. sorrythanksiloveyou.com



It's a shoe-in

Victoria Hampshire makes things look easy. Whether it's her interior design work at the Relais Blu hotel in southern Italy or in her latest foray into fashion, Capri Positano, her design approach is always bright and relaxed.

"My mum had an interiors shop in Paddington for 40 years and was one of the first people to import French linen into Australia," says Hampshire. "I've grown up around the idea of pieces that never go out of style."

Capri Positano is her new collection of bespoke sandals, unisex loafers and linen resort-wear - all handmade by local artisans on the Amalfi and Sorrento coasts. "My sandal-makers cut out the form of the soles, and doesn't buy pre-made straps; they're all made individually to order," says Hampshire.

From the website, customers can design their own sandals with a short four- to five-week turnaround. Capri Positano sandals are priced from \$170. capripositanosandals.com, 0438 494 894 MAGGIE SCARDIFIELD

HOT HUB

East beats west

Fresh restaurants and luxury digs inject new vibrancy into the alternative scene of LA's Eastside.

The Eastside of Los Angeles has long been a magnet for artists, musicians and bohemians, but hasn't been known for refined restaurants and luxe lodgings. A handful of new enterprises is remedying that.

Leading the way is Hotel Covell, a micro-inn in Los Feliz, with five exquisite rooms conceived by interior designer Sally Breer. Breer was inspired by the idea of a fictional bon vivant and each suite reflects a different chapter in his life. "None of the rooms match, so repeat visitors can have a completely different experience," says hotelier Dustin Lancaster, the entrepreneur behind L&E Oyster Bar, El Condor restaurant and the popular Bar Covell in the same 1930s building as the hotel. Mid-century furnishings and eclectic accessories in a room called "Chapter 3" recall artistic days in Paris. "Chapter 4", meanwhile, with its malachite-printed walls, Moroccan-style master bedroom and clawfoot tub, is the most luxe suite. Each room has a turntable plush bedding and a Smeg-equipped kitchenette. Guests can explore Los Feliz's vintage boutiques, retro bars and bustling cafés; the espresso virtuosos behind G&B Coffee are opening an outlet here soon.

A 10-minute drive away in Silver Lake, chef Zach Pollack is wowing diners at Alimento, turning out adventurous Italian-Californian fare. "I'm trying to make Italian cuisine new, fun and reflective of local ingredients," he says. Among the high points are a chickpea pancake with lamb belly, salt cod served with parmesan "in the style of the Mantovan Jew".

Among further culinary attractions in the area, all-day diner Dinette serves the likes of French-style pastries, farro salads and spaghetti with meatballs from a curved window. Diners then take their seats under an awning. Owner Gareth Kantner is also behind the Silver Lake institution Café Stella, a popular French bistro. And no visit to the Eastside would be complete without a drink at Stella's bar.

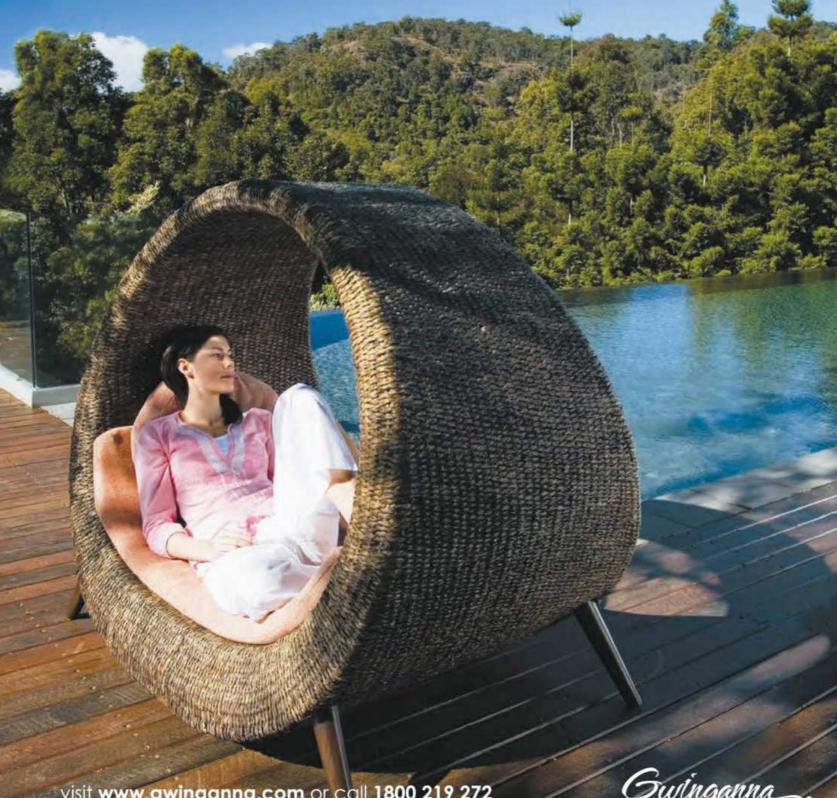
With such new enticements, it's no wonder that the east is unseating the west as the buzziest place to be in LA. Hotel Covell (rooms from \$245), 4626 Hollywood Blvd, Los Angeles, hotelcovell.com GEORGE EPAMINONDAS



COLOUR THERAPY Who says colouring books are just for kids? Artist Steve McDonald's intricate line work features in Fantastic Cities (Chronicle Books, \$24.95), for "meditative colouring adventures and imaginative flights of fancy". Textas at the ready.

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CAPRIKEVIN KWAN

Author

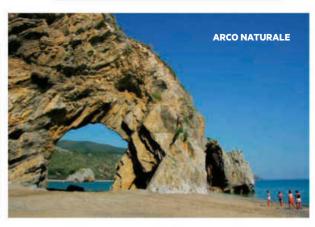
"Capri is a place you could spend several lifetimes enjoying. I've never been anywhere in the world with such an intoxicating mix of

beauty, history and style. No wonder the rich and famous have been visiting for millennia – Tiberius fell so madly in love with it that he moved the court of the Roman empire there in 26AD.

"I visited Capri after turning in my latest novel, thinking it would be a good place to unwind after gruelling deadlines, but there were so many amazing things to do that relaxation soon took a back seat - I spent my days swimming the turquoise waters, exploring archaeological treasures, hiking dramatic seaside trails, wandering down the lanes of Capri town, admiring the exquisite

shops and savouring the sublime cuisine.

"Atop every visitor's list should be a walk to the Arco Naturale, an incredible geological formation that rises several hundred feet out of the sea. While you're there, have lunch at nearby Ristorante Le

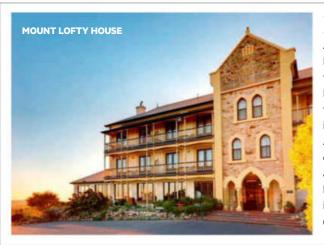


"I've never been anywhere in the world with such an intoxicating mix of beauty, history and style."

Grottelle, with its wondrous views and even more wondrous pasta. If you're feeling brave, take the bus to Anacapri. The bus speeds along the narrowest cliffside roads and makes several death-defying turns, but it's the most scenic ride you'll ever take.

"In Anacapri, get a pair of chic leather sandals handmade by the legendary Antonio Viva and visit the gardens of Villa San Michele. I'd also recommend Da Luigi ai Faraglioni – possibly the most spectacular beach club on the planet. Sitting under an umbrella sipping an ice-cold limoncello with views framed by the majestic Faraglioni Rocks is the closest thing to heaven on earth."

Kevin Kwan is the author of China Rich Girlfriend, published by Allen & Unwin, \$29.99.



Head for the Hills

Among the greenery and mist of Piccadilly Valley in the Adelaide Hills sits Mount Lofty House. The 33-room property features beautifully manicured gardens and two vineyards, but the real unwinding should begin with a visit to the Stables Day Spa on site. Set within the original stable built in 1852, the spa has been thoughtfully restored and sees equal use by hotel guests and visitors. Within its cooling sandstone walls, the treatments, offered in three rooms, use Australian-made Waterlily products. The Signature Spa Ritual – a two-hour escape combining a botanical spa facial, hair treatment, cane sugar exfoliation and full body massage with cold-pressed oil – provides the ultimate relaxation before you return to the city. Or stay a while, return to the manor, and wake up in the Hills. Mount Lofty House, 74 Mt Lofty Summit Rd, Crafers, SA, (08) 8339 6777, mtloftyhouse.com.au JERRIE-JOY REDMAN LLOYD

VANITY CASE A KIND OF MAGIC

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- **3 NAPOLEON PERDIS** Light Switch Luminizer Palette, \$70. napoleonperdis.com.au
- 4 SURRATT BEAUTY In The Shadows Eye Shadow Palette, \$137. net-a-porter.com
- **5** ESTÉE LAUDER Pure Colour Envy Sculpting Eyeshadow in Defiant Nude, \$90. esteelauder.com.au





SILVER LINING

Luxury cruise line Silversea has added another ship to its eight-vessel fleet, Silver Muse, which will embark on her first voyage in April 2017. The ship will take 596 guests in all-suite accommodation. The announcement comes as Silversea opens reservations for its world cruise aboard Silver Whisper, an epic 116-day journey across 62 destinations in 25 countries, departing 6 January 2017. silversea.com **PEOPLE POWER**

Thanks to their social impact program Fathom, Carnival has been given the go-ahead by US authorities to cruise to

Cuba. Fathom's focus is on promoting cultural exchange between American citizens and communities requiring humanitarian support. The first itineraries will begin in April 2016 aboard MV Adonia between Port Miami and the Dominican Republic. Seven-day cruises will then be introduced the following month between Miami and Cuba. fathom.org WINTER IN HAVANA

MSC Cruises has also announced its newlyrenovated 2120-guest ship, Opera, will home-port in Havana for the winter 2015-16 cruise season. Starting 22 December 2015, MSC will offer 16 Caribbean itineraries, including trips to Jamaica and Mexico. Opera will leave for Europe in April

COOL CHANGE

Abercrombie & Kent has announced a new ship for

2016. msccruises.com.au

the 2016-17 Antarctic season. Le Ponant's youngest liner, Le Lyrial. Of four expeditions, one voyage will be themed on climate change and another will take in the Antarctic Peninsula, South Georgia and the Falkland Islands. Le Lyrial has 122 staterooms, each with balconies; the exploration begins the moment you wake. abercrombiekent.com.au

TWO-WHEEL TOURING

Cycling continues to play a major part in Scenic's European river-cruise itineraries. Each of the current 11 Scenic Space-Ships house 30 electric bikes, so guests can cover more ground on-shore, and two new vessels will join the fleet next year. The e-bikes have 27 pre-programmed routes, but tour guides can also be arranged - perhaps for a cycle along the Danube, scenic.com.au



Now's the time to plan a spring weekend escape.

How about a road trip to check out one of the excellent regional dining experiences in our 2016 Restaurant Guide? We've been road-testing the new Alfa Romeo Giulietta (pictured here in Bondi) and we're sold. Prices begin at \$29,000. alfaromeo.com.au





Aman to that

If you haven't heard of Playa Grande Beach in the Dominican Republic, Aman is about to change that. The super-luxury resort group has picked a dramatic site above this glorious 1,600-metre beach for its latest property, Amanera, opening late this year. The setting is spectacular - a clifftop backed by the jungle-clad mountains of



the Cordillera Septentrional and dropping sharply to the Atlantic. It promises to be a typically exceptional Aman, with 24 one-bedroom casitas (and a two-bed Bay View Casa) enjoying sweeping ocean views, a spectacularly situated golf course, and private beach club for dining, watersports and lazing in hammocks. Aman's début golf resort will have its own clubhouse with bar, restaurant, gym, pro shop and signature Aman Spa. CEO Olivier Jolivet says the group's début in the Dominican Republic is "the perfect example of how we take an unexpected destination and within it find the most exceptional and dramatic location to create a sybaritic hideaway unlike any other." amanresorts.com KENDALL HILL



September

IS A GREAT MONTH TO ... Swing out at the 24th Annual

Noosa Jazz Festival featuring 45 performances at Lions Park (3-6 September). Our hemisphere's largest floral festival, Floriade, takes place in Canberra (12 September to 11 October). Enjoy the blooms by day, then hit the Floriade NightFest (23-27 September). The **Telstra Perth Fashion** Festival (15-20 September) includes runway shows and collection launches from established and emerging

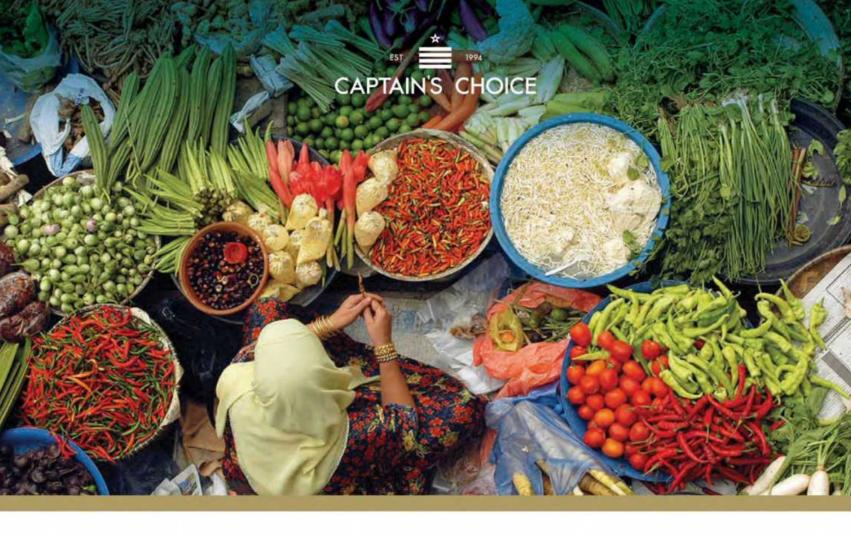
talent. In Europe? Head to Switzerland for a threeweekend cultural program to mark the opening of the LAC Lugano Arte e Cultura (12-27 September), while in London Open House (19-20 September) opens more than 800 buildings usually closed to the public. Adelaide is in full swing for its 2015 Indonesianthemed OzAsia Festival (24 September to 4 October); our picks are the hawker-style food market and The Moon Lantern festival. It's your last chance to see the Archibald, Wynne and Sulman Prizes at the Art Gallery of New South Wales before the exhibition packs up on 27 September:

visit to place your vote for the

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- 3 LOUIS VUITTON keepall, \$5750. louisvuitton.com.au
- 4 GUCCI duffle bag, \$1235. 1300 442 878, gucci.com
- **5** BRICS Bojola duffle bag, \$695 from Hunt Leather. 1800 064 768, huntleather.com.au





New Mexican in Copenhagen

Ex-Noma pastry chef Rosio Sánchez makes a (taco) stand in the Danish capital.

You want cod skins or rose petals with your tacos? Then head to Hija de Sánchez, the taquería that former Noma pastry chef Rosio Sánchez has opened in Copenhagen's Torvehallerne markets. Her aim is to serve authentic tortillas, for which she's importing corn from Oaxaca and making her own masa daily, then she's playing around with the rest. "As long as we have the corn that's coming from Mexico, we can fill them with something deliciously local, then that's fine," says Sánchez.

Traditionalists won't go past the chicken mole made from a dozen or so chillies blended with chocolate, while crisp



cod skins served with tomato and jalapeño salsa are reminiscent of the classic chicharrón you might get in Mexico.

Her first guest chef, Lars Williams, a fermentation freak who's responsible for the weird and wonderful in Noma's research kitchen, gave his tacos a "new Nordic" touch scattering purple rose petals over his black-bean miso, fermented habanero, smoked butter and gooseberry combo. A snip at \$15 for two.

Sánchez, who was born in Chicago to Mexican parents, worked in New York before heading to Noma and Copenhagen five years ago. The Danish capital is an apt place to start her own venture because there's a need for good Mexican food and also because of her support crew led by her former Noma boss René Redzepi, Williams and the many others lined up to guest chef in the taco stand. Hija de Sánchez, Torvehallerne, Frederiksborggade 21, 1360, Copenhagen K, hijadesanchez.dk JENI PORTER

RIVIERA REVERIE Dreaming about warmer climes? Perhaps the waters of Portofino? Tom Ford's Fleur de Portofino takes inspiration from the Italian Riviera with notes of citrus, acacia blossom and honey. One spritz and you can almost feel the sand between your toes. Almost. Private Blend Fleur de Portofino, 50ml, \$298. davidjones.com.au



BY CLIVE DORMAN



Most of the fareslashing wasn't visible from the cheap seats down the back because the war was being fought at the front of the cabin. Virgin Australia's chief executive, John Borghetti, described the discounting of fares for business travellers in this period as the most aggressive it had been since "way before" the collapse of Ansett in 2001.

The most thorough report to date on the aftermath of the war - by Australia's biggest travel retailer, Flight Centre, in

Sydney to Canberra has become the most expensive 30-minute plane ride in the country, with corporate fares averaging \$122.50 (up 13.6 per cent) and the retail average \$81.30 (up 13.1 per cent).

Among the key routes examined by the report, only two reported air fares dropping: Melbourne-Adelaide (down 6.9 per cent for corporates to \$119.40 and down 4.4 per cent retail to \$97.10) and Melbourne-Brisbane (down 3.1 per cent

flying around the country (as measured by available seat kilometres), while Jetstar will cut capacity by 2.3 per cent.

The smaller Virgin Australia will grow by 2.2 per cent, while its relatively tiny low-cost subsidiary, Tigerair, will grow 8.9 per cent.

Compared with what both airlines have become used to, profits are healthy as a result of a reduction of almost 50 per cent in their fuel bills in the past year after a near-halving of the world oil price.

Qantas's overall 65 per cent market share - according to the latest reports. that has been reduced to around 62 per cent - but Virgin Australia's 2017 target of carrying 30 per cent of the nation's business travellers.

At last report it was within a few percentage points of hitting that target early. As one of the former inner circle of top executives at Qantas, Borghetti has never doubted what he needed to do at Virgin.

"It would only take a spark to launch round two [of the discounting war], especially if Virgin appears set to lose hard-won gains."

ustralian air fares are on the march again after a discounting war following Virgin Australia's decision to relaunch itself as a full-service airline and enter the business market.

Qantas and Virgin are now trying to recoup the hundreds of millions of dollars they lost between 2012 and 2014 as Virgin muscled in on Qantas's business travel monopoly.

conjunction with Sydney analyst the Centre for Asia-Pacific Aviation - shows both average retail and average business fares paid on key domestic routes rising by up to 13.6 per cent in the past year.

On the benchmark Sydney-Melbourne route, average fares paid for corporates are up 3.1 per cent to \$158.10, while average retail fares in all classes have jumped 6.9 per cent to \$127.50.

corporate to \$172.90 and down 1.9 per cent retail to \$140.30).

"The domestic aviation market is showing the first promising signs of rational capacity management in a number of years," the report says. In other words, extreme discounting has stopped.

Qantas, the report says, is forecast to end the 2015 financial year with a 3.5 per cent reduction in the number of seats it is

And that presents the temptation to resume their discounting war.

"Each side remains sensitive to market share and will be watching the other carefully for signs of expansion," the Flight Centre-CAPA report says. "It would only take a spark to launch round two [of the discounting war], especially if Virgin appears set to lose hard-won gains."

That refers not only to Virgin's attempt to breach

"I knew that we needed to first reposition every aspect of the airline - product, service, name,"

"We could quite easily tomorrow slash and burn - cut staff, dumb down the product, close a lounge or two. That would save us millions, and next season's numbers would probably look pretty good, but I tell you what, in a year's time we would've gone backwards."



WINE FLIGHTS

Qantas's recent tie-up with Rockpool sommeliers starts to bear fruit this month. Neil Perry's Rockpool Group sommeliers began taste-testing Champagnes and Australian wines. and in July the first of their new selections will be offered in lounges, and onboard in September. With Rockpool in charge of both food and drinks menus for the national carrier,

passengers can expect some perfect matches on the drinking and dining front. Lounge members will also be able to enjoy monthly cocktail specials devised by the Qantas Rockpool sommeliers. gantas.com.au

NEW-LOOK MALAYSIA

Malaysia Airlines is no more. From September 1 the 43-year-old carrier assumes a new name (not yet released at the time of going to press) as part of sweeping changes in the wake of the airline's disastrous 2014. Services have also been scrapped or reduced across its network: the daily Brisbane to



Kuala Lumpur service ceased last month, while weekly Perth services have been cut from 12 to seven. malaysiaairlines.com

CANADA DIRECT

Powder hounds, adventure heads and lovers of the great outdoors in Queensland rejoice. From next June, Air Canada will commence thrice-weekly direct flights from Brisbane to Vancouver, with the carrier flagging its intention to upgrade to a daily service if authorities permit. Tickets are on sale now. aircanada.com.au KENDALL HILL



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A winning hand

With intimate new hotels, luxe spas, and top-notch dining and shopping, Sin City shows a more sophisticated side, writes **George Epaminondas**.



INSIDER

Delano Las Vegas

By Vegas standards, this sophisticated 1117-room newcomer is considered a boutique property. The lobby seduces with two colossal boulders from the Nevada desert, patterned rugs evoking the Colorado River, and a soothing lemongrass scent. Suites resemble inviting apartments, with neutral furnishings, tufted headboards and black marble bathrooms. Rivea, the Alain Ducasse restaurant on the top floor, has jaw-dropping views of the Strip. 3940 Las Vegas Blvd South, delanolasvegas.com

The Cromwell

Dark wood floors, purple leather sofas and rococo artworks imbue the 188 rooms of this hotel with an appealingly louche sensibility. Enticements include an Italian restaurant by celebrity chef Giada De Laurentiis, and a rooftop club by nightlife guru Victor Drai. By day, guests loll around in poolside cabanas, and by night they cavort on the dance

floor to electro. The hotel is a stone's throw from the geyser spectacle of the Bellagio Fountains. 3595 Las Vegas Blvd South, caesars.com

DO

Sahra Spa & Hammam

Switch the blackjack table for the massage table. Try the 80-minute Red Flower Hammam Experience at the Sahra Spa & Hammam in The Cosmopolitan. Lying on a heated stone slab, vou're cleansed with mint bubbles, exfoliated with a coffee scrub, pampered with a rose

slathered in honey. You'll leave feeling as coddled as Suleiman the Magnificent, perhaps with a strange craving for baklava. 3708 Las Vegas Blvd South, cosmopolitanlasvegas.com

body masque, and

The retail scene offers an embarrassment of riches and it helps to be wealthy to fully explore them. High-end brands such as Tom Ford, and Lanvin populate The Shops at Crystals, while department stores Saks Fifth Avenue and Neiman Marcus dominate Fashion Show Mall. The glitzy malls at Caesars Palace and The Venetian conjure Italian piazze at dusk. But if it's bargains you seek, take a half-hour trip to one of two Premium Outlets.

Aria Resort & Casino

Aria's master mixologist Craig Schoettler is shaking things up with customdesigned beers, and flavoured ice cubes that change a drink's flavour as they melt. At Sage Restaurant, his Cognacbased Smoke Missing Mirrors is infused with a puff of smoke from a Bourbon barrel plank. 3730 Las Vegas Blvd South, aria.com



Joël Robuchon

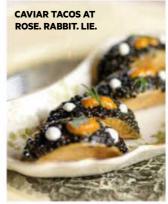
The eminent French chef has two restaurants at MGM Grand - a formal dining room and this casual outpost where patrons observe the culinary acrobatics from a long counter. Tasting menus are a flurry of sublime small plates, such as langoustine with green curry, foie gras tortellini, and caramelised quail. 3799 Las Vegas Blvd South, mgmgrand.com

Rose. Rabbit. Lie.

At this supper club in The Cosmopolitan, the energy is infectious and the offerings are plentiful everything from caviar tacos to whole roasted Alaskan crab. A chanteuse purred next to our table. while another player performed contortionist feats atop a piano. 3708 Las Vegas Blvd South, cosmopolitanlasvegas.com

Hakkasan

This global entity - with outposts from Abu Dhabi to Shanghai – is renowned for its appealing ambience and tempting Cantonese fare. At MGM Grand the winner is the roasted Chilean sea bass with Chinese honey. Don't miss the staggering multi-level club upstairs. 3799 Las Vegas Blvd South, hakkasanlv.com



DON'T MISS

For an off-Strip excursion, venture to downtown's Fremont East District. The area is known for its cluster of authentic and eccentric bars, eateries and galleries that contrast with the city's mega-resorts.

SWEET DEAL

Mio Ogasawara's exquisite Japanese-inspired desserts at Sweets Raku (5040 West Spring Mountain Rd, No 3) are drawing food lovers to Chinatown, about three kilometres west of the Strip.





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Sardinia is a magical island: forested limestone mountains hiding ancient villages; rolling plains; pristine coastline scattered with sleepy fishing villages; a buzzing capital and gracious hospitality, make it a wonderful place to explore, particularly in the spring!

Due to demand, Hidden Italy will be offering a second Sardinia tour next year: 6 May to 18 May 2016.

For full details see: www.hiddenitaly.com.au.



TRAVEL OVERSEAS



Gourmet shopping

They're the flavours of the month, so put these items at the top of your wish list.





Smeg With precision-matched appliances featuring state-of-the-art technologies and Italian styling comes the new Classic range from Smeg. There's also the option of adding Smeg's gourmet cooking stone for artisanal baking. smeg.com.au



Vintec The new Noir 42-bottle wine cabinet is the latest addition to Vintec's sophisticated Noir range. With two separate compartments, this model can cellar your wines while keeping whites chilled for service. vintec.com.au



Essteele Designed and made in Italy, Essteele Per Sempre, the cookware of choice for chefs, combines quality 18/10 stainless steel with a thick aluminium core for perfect heat distribution and control on any stovetop. essteele.com.au



Harvey Norman The Tefal Cuisine Companion kitchen machine is an all-in-one food preparation machine that makes light work of cooking by replacing up to 10 different kitchen appliances. harveynorman.com.au



Domayne This striking "Pipe" table light, \$149, features an on-trend exposed-bulb look surrounded by an orb made from intersecting "pipes" that have a beautiful copper finish. domayne.com.au



Captain's Choice As a VIP guest of Grand Hyatt Hotels, go behind the scenes and gain culinary insights that money can't buy. Brochure out now. For more information call 1300 163 958 or visit captainschoice.com.au.



Acqua Panna Introducing Acqua Panna's new Toscana label, which tells the story of its incredible heritage and celebrates its official acknowledgement as a 100 per cent Tuscan product of excellence. acquapanna.com



Frédérique Constant The new Delight collection from Frédérique Constant, \$3,850, features an elegant combination of stainless steel and plated rose gold, diamond-set bezel and sapphire crystal and quartz movement. frederiqueconstant.com



Castello Creamy White is an indulgent double cream cheese matured from the centre for an incredibly soft, smooth texture throughout and a rich flavour – perfect with a glass of your favourite white wine, castellocheese.com



October There's Edith Piaf on the gramophone, good wine in the glasses and plenty of flirting at the table – mais oui, the French issue is back.

FOOD

French cakes

From gâteaux and savarins to a seriously gooey tarte Tropézienne, we're baking à la Française and starting a party in the kitchen.

Guillaume en famille

Sydney's favourite French chef cooks for the families of the good and great in their homes in his glam new book, and we've got your preview.

Here's the boeuf

A chicken in every pot? Not once you've tasted Rodney Dunn's takes on French beef.

Holy crêpe

Stir and sit, swirl and flip – take the humble pancake and prepare to lift it to new heights with bold ideas, savoury and sweet.

TRAVEL

Road to happiness

On a leisurely "route du bonheur" through the villages of south-west France, David Leser finds too much foie gras – and Bordeaux and sunshine – is barely enough.

James Henry's Paris

Australian chef and Paris insider James Henry reveals his favourite haunts, from Israeli snacks in the Marais to Negronis at Le Red House.

Vive Marseilles

Buoyed by a direct Eurostar service and new investment, France's second-biggest city is riding a fresh wave of energy and creativity.

ON SALE 24 SEPTEMBER

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Blu Dot bludot.com.au

Bunnings Warehouse bunnings.com.au

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Chef and the Cook (02) 8004 6085,

chefandthecook.com.au

Concrete Matter concrete-matter.com

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countryroad.com.au

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thecountrytrader.com.au

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Stone stone-market.co

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GUIDE TO SYMBOLS

S SIMPLE G GLUTEN-FREE **V** VEGETARIAN A CAN BE PREPARED AHEAD



MEASURES & EQUIPMENT

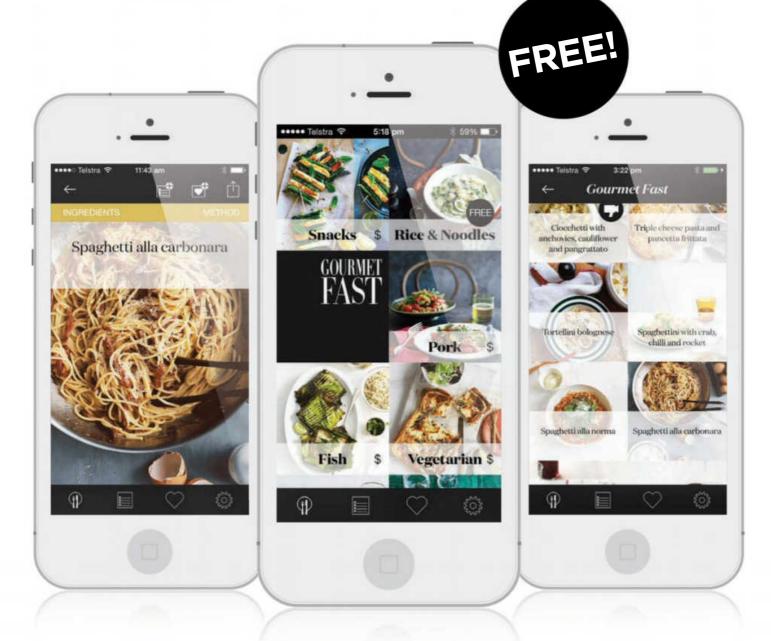
- All cup and spoon measures are level and based on Australian metric measures.
- * Eggs have an average weight of 59gm unless otherwise specified.
- * Fruit and vegetables are washed, peeled and medium-sized unless otherwise specified.
- Oven temperatures are for conventional ovens and need to be adjusted for fan-forced ovens.
- Pans are medium-sized and heavy-based; cake tins are stainless steel, unless otherwise specified. **COOKING TIPS**
- When seasoning food to taste, we use sea salt and freshly ground pepper unless otherwise specified.
- To blanch an ingredient, cook it briefly in boiling water, then drain it. To refresh it, plunge it in plenty of iced water (this stops the cooking process), then drain it.
- We recommend using free-range eggs, chicken and pork. We use female pork for preference.
- To dry-roast spices, cook the spices in a dry pan, stirring continuously over medium-high heat until they're fragrant. The cooking time varies depending on the spices used.

- * RSPCA Australia's recommendations for killing crustaceans humanely are to first render the animals insensible by placing them in the freezer (under 4C – signs of insensibility are when the tail or outer mouth parts can be moved without resistance); crustaceans must then be killed quickly by cutting through the centreline of the head and thorax with a knife. For crabs, insert a knife into the head. This splitting and spiking destroys the nerve centres of the animal.
- * All herbs are fresh, and both leaves and tender stems are used, unless otherwise specified.
- Non-reactive bowls are made from glass, ceramic or plastic. Use them in preference to metal bowls when marinating to prevent the acid in marinades reacting with metal and imparting a metallic taste.
- * Eggwash is lightly beaten egg unless otherwise specified, used for glazing or sealing.
- Sugar syrup is made of equal parts caster sugar and water, unless otherwise specified. Bring the mixture to the boil to dissolve the sugar, remove it from the heat and cool it before use.
- * Acidulated water is a mixture of water and lemon juice; it prevents discolouration.

- * To sterilise jars and lids, run them through the hot rinse cycle in a dishwasher, or wash them in hot soapy water, rinse well, place on a tray in a cold oven and heat at 120C for 30 minutes.
- To blind bake, line a pastry-lined tart tin with baking paper, then fill it with weights (ceramic weights, rice and dried beans work best).
- * To test whether marmalade, iam or ielly is at setting point, you'll need a chilled saucer (place a couple in the freezer before you start cooking). Remove the pan from the heat, spoon a little mixture onto the saucer and return it to the freezer for 30 seconds, then draw your finger through the mixture - it should leave a trail, indicating that the mixture has reached setting point. If not, cook for another few minutes before testing again. If you prefer, use a sugar thermometer to measure when the mixture reaches 105C; once it does, you can begin testing for setting point.
- To clarify butter, cook it over low heat until the fat and the milk solids separate. Strain off the clear butter and discard the milk solids. You will lose about 20 per cent of the volume in milk solids.



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Melting moments

Velvety pistachio ice-cream sandwiched between rounds of meringue? A perfect way to cap off a meal.

Pistachio vacherin

Begin this recipe a day ahead to make the ice-cream.

Prep time 20 mins, cook 30 mins (plus chilling, freezing)

Serves 10

- 150 gm blanched almonds, coarsely chopped
- 150 gm pure icing sugar, plus extra for dusting
- 5 eggwhites
- 130 gm caster sugar
 - Raspberries and chopped pistachio nuts,
 - to serve

Pistachio ice-cream

- 1 litre (4 cups) milk
- 1 vanilla bean, split, seeds scraped
- 260 gm caster sugar
- 12 egg volks
- 500 ml (2 cups) pouring cream
- 240 gm finely chopped pistachio nuts
- 1 For pistachio ice-cream, bring milk and vanilla to the boil in a large saucepan. Meanwhile, whisk sugar and yolks in a heatproof bowl until pale and creamy. Add hot milk gradually, whisking to combine, then return to pan and stir continuously over medium heat until mixture thickly coats the spoon (15-20 minutes). Strain through a sieve into a bowl placed over ice, add cream and stir occasionally until chilled (20-30 minutes). Meanwhile, finely grind 2 tbsp pistachios with a mortar and pestle and combine with remaining pistachios. Churn custard in batches in an ice-cream machine, then stir in pistachios and spoon into a 23cm springform tin with the base lined with baking paper and freeze overnight.
- 2 Preheat oven to 180C and line 2 oven trays with baking paper. Blend almonds in a food processor until finely ground. Place in a bowl, then sieve in icing sugar and stir to combine. Whisk
- eggwhites in an electric mixer until soft peaks form, then gradually add caster sugar, whisking until smooth, glossy and stiff peaks form. Fold in almond mixture, then transfer to a piping bag with a 2cm nozzle and pipe two 23cm discs (buy baking paper with circle guides) onto prepared trays. Bake, swapping trays halfway through cooking, until meringue is crisp (17-20 minutes). Turn off oven and cool with oven door ajar.
- **3** Turn ice-cream out of mould. Carefully remove baking paper from base of one meringue and place on the base of prepared ice-cream, then invert ice cream so meringue is on the base. Trim edges with a serrated knife and making a gentle sawing action, then top with remaining meringue, trim evenly and freeze until required. Serve vacherin scattered with raspberries and pistachios and dusted with icing sugar.



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